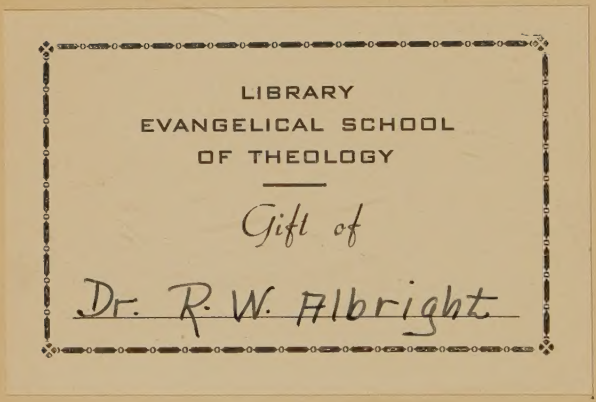
The Sunday School Teacher As a Soul-Winner

WILLIAM FRANCIS BERGER

MAY 23 1957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THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER AS A SOUL-WINNER

The Sunday-School Teacher as a Soul-Winner

By
WILLIAM FRANCIS BERGER, A. M.

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To the Dearest Soul I Ever Knew on this Earth, I Dedicate, with Undying Affection, this Book.

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FOREWORD

THE chapters of this book were written quite spontaneously week by week, in the midst of a busy pastoral career. They were delivered as Lecture-Talks to Teachers' Training Classes at various times and places. They arose out of the conviction that the great company of Sunday-school teachers of our churches should be, above everything else, winners of souls.

This strong belief became so fully emphasized in my own soul that I was led to a deeper study of this phase of Sunday-school work. As a result of careful reading and investigations covering a long period of time and conditions, I found that the teachers in many of our Christian churches were scarcely moved in their efforts with motives of personal responsibilities. On the contrary, it seemed to me that they were influenced, in many instances, by too much of the materialistic spirit of the age. By reason of this, therefore, vast numbers of our Sunday-school scholars, old and young alike, are transferring their redemptive hopes and happiness to a world without a Christ who saves the souls of men from sin. And so it has come to me, as to many others, that the great salvatory Truth of His Love, should receive its complement, through the soul-winning love of our Sunday-school teachers.

W. F. B.

West Hoboken, N. J.

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I

INTRODUCTION

ONE of the most important, living factors in a Sunday school is the real teacher. An efficient superintendent may seem just as essential to its purpose and progress. But while his office may be unique, in many ways, the personality and position of a teacher is far more commanding and vital, because of his intimate contact with the subjects under his charge. A superintendent, from the very nature of his position, never finds himself in such close touch with the Sunday-school members as the teachers. For this reason it is believed that they are at the center of real spiritual success in Sunday-school work.

True, it may be said that every phase of Sunday-school service, has its hopes and harvests of souls, but this can only be so when each teacher of the school has intimate relations through Christian faith, love, and sacrifice, with the minds and hearts of all others. Too much, therefore, cannot be said, by way of emphasis, of the teacher's character, and office, in the spheres of material and spiritual relations and activities, and in his attitudes towards those who are to be led to a full salvation in Christ.

But, while many phases or features of this all-

embracing service could be discussed at length, it is sufficient to point out as clearly as possible, what wise and experienced Sunday-school students have considered the essentials of a Sunday-school teacher's success, in securing scholars for the school, in having them redeemed from sin, and in getting them to enter into the Kingdom of God. In other words, the purpose of this study shall be the prime, indispensable, and personal factors of a Sunday-school teacher as a winner of souls.

And here, once for all, it may be said that the main object of every Sunday-school teacher's faith, love, and task, should be the rescue of children, men, and women, from sin unto salvation and to lead them into union with the great Church of Jesus Christ. No higher—no nobler—no more ideal service can any Sunday-school teacher render to humanity or to God than this!

Now, under the existing conditions of many of our Sunday schools, the first thing, it seems to me, that ought to be considered, is the personnel of each school. But it must, however, be understood that this phase is not to be studied from the collective side alone. It shall rather be viewed from the individualistic aspects as they stand out in each school and its members. This seems the reasonable way of approach to and analysis of the elements in the life and labours of the school. For, it is well known, that in every body of men and women, who are engaged in social, moral, or spiritual work, the characters and conduct of the individuals that compose the organization, are the essen-

tials, after all, in securing marked successes. All solid and lasting Christian service depends upon such persons as are consecrated to the high tasks of duty well done. This has always been true in the history of every reform or philanthropic enterprise. And especially has it been so, in the history of the Christian Church. There every great and helpful movement that has bettered humanity's hopes and increased its happiness, was almost invariably ushered in through some great hearts or lives fully given in faith, love, and devotion, to God and to man.

So true is this of the real Christian workers, in every department of church life, that we can well afford to stop long enough to reason about the intense and practical sacrifices for Christ, namely, the sacrifices the noble bands of Sunday-school teachers are making for the souls of men.

Now, it may be asserted, in spite of contrary claims, that every successful church organization, as well as every aggressive Sunday school, has its strong and efficient preachers and teachers. It could not be otherwise with them for such persons are essential at every turn and task of the Kingdom of God. And the fact is that no Christian church can long exist without the best talent in its pulpit and responsive hearts in the pews. No more can a Sunday school prosper and progress, without educated, drilled, and equipped teachers in its various departments. They are the machinery and power generators of the school, if such a crude illustration may be allowed. Or it may be put in another way like this. The teachers of

the Sunday school are the live factors of the machine and the attendants—adults and younger folks—are the materials by which the machine makes its success.

Perhaps, a more dignified illustration of the coördinated relations between teachers and Sunday-school pupils, may be found in the beautiful parable spoken by Christ as it is recorded in the fifteenth chapter of John's Gospel. From that parable certain fair conclusions may rightly be drawn in reference to every Sunday school. The vine can represent the school, the branches the teachers, and the leaves and fruit the hosts of scholars in it. If we borrow this wonderful figure, which expresses Jesus' own ideas of mutual cooperation between Him and His servants, it will show that the relation of a Sunday school and its teachers is most unique and far-reaching as a great socializing factor. Indeed, it does show generically if not specifically, that the Sunday school of today, if true to its station, does give the picture of the intimacy of Christian fellowship, of the atmosphere of devotion, of the sacrifices of hearts, of the deep yearnings for souls, of the unswerving fidelity to Christ, on the part of the teachers in their efforts to save lost ones for redemption.

Our appreciation of the principle involved here, has fresh meaning and inspiring touches, in the wonderful and hopeful outlook toward the future. For does Jesus not say: "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing"? And can we not say, in turn, without any irreverence towards Him or making a

parody of His blessed words,—"He that abideth in the Sunday school and the Sunday school in him, the same bringeth forth many souls"? If we follow this thought, therefore, in its inner and implied meanings, to a final analysis, the practical conclusion is reached that real Sunday-school work done by teachers, is always a denial of any and all methods of a material kind; and, on the other hand, a splendid approval of every service on their part, that has the baptism of Christ's favour and the support of earnest Christian hearts. If we take our stand here, it will be seen, without question, that the Christian society, in which we are toiling and reaping, does grow richer and more influential through the human lives born into the Kingdom of Truth and Love.

And if we go back into the centuries before the Master's age, we shall find a wise teacher's words of praise and prospect, equally honouring the worthy servant of God, as he reaps the sheaves of eternal life. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him"—Psa. 126-6. Do not those words show as well as those of Christ, that real service, on the part of a true Sunday-school teacher, does open the Way of Life to souls, and does set such redeemed ones upon the Rock of safety and eternal Hope? It may be asked whether this is not enough inspiration to any one in the service of the King? And is this not even reward enough to any teacher in a Sunday school?

But this principle of coordination between teachers

and their Sunday-school work, means still larger things—things that touch upon the ideals of life. There are the spheres of wisdom, culture, and character, needed so much today among men and their children. And not only are they needed as established factors of human society, but they are the growing tributaries of the mighty stream of civilization flowing on toward the future ages. In view of this fact, it is well to note what a great work of love rests upon our Sunday-school teachers, in developing the minds and hearts of the boys and girls, men and women, in their care, for instruction and spiritual enlightenment. Just think, therefore, what it must mean to a teacher, to stand in the presence of a rough, uncultured, unsaved boy or girl, knowing at the time, that the power lies in hand, through the help of the Spirit of God, to transform him or her, into an angel of light, beauty, and love! And just think what such a result must mean to the scope and service of the human society to which the subject belongs, in its ideals of life and love. Immeasurable in influence, incalculable in spiritual benefits, must such a labour of personal sacrifice be!

Here, then, is the secret of the grandeur and glory of a teacher's self-giving life, and the mighty wonder of God's infinite grace wrought into the soul of a human being. One other person of superior wisdom puts the same thing like this. "As the fruits and flowers rise rank upon rank in response to the advancing summer, so all that is most refined, uplifting, and exalting, in human life and character, is brought to

perfection and grace, by the tender, sympathetic, and practical efforts of the teacher under whose ideals of love, such life may be."

A teacher's ministry, therefore, to a human life—young or old—has everything to do with the soul, but it has equally as much to do with the minds and hearts of the scholars of the class. Indeed, it may be believed that one of the greatest contributing factors to Sunday-school strength and service, in the Church, or outside of it, is a distinctive ministry of efficient teachers, calling forth out of their classes, the splendid qualities of intellect and heart, and training them toward a higher education—an education that, according to the best students of the problems of society, lies at bottom of all political, social, and moral obligations of mankind. And if these men know what they are advocating, then it surely is not a service without great reward to every teacher of the Sunday school, when he gives thought to the ethical, moral, and social values of life, and the culturing influences they may have upon the Christian Church out in the world of sin and unrighteousness, where good citizenship is so much needed and where men must be led into the paths of right. It may be asked, without any offense to the finest sense of taste, what better service can the Sunday-school teacher give to the Church or to the Christian religion—or to our national life, than that which makes youth safe in morals—strong and steady in social habits—and heroic in sacrifice? Is this an ideal social condition unreachable? Is this a moral

tone of mankind impracticable? And is this a sacrificial program beyond the reach of mortals?

Would it not be sheer blasphemy of the Master's words to answer these questions in the negative? Indeed, it would not only be a most impious thing to do, but it would be a contemptible confession of the weakness of the present system of Sunday-school work of our modern churches. After all, is such a disclosure of the methods of most Sunday schools a relic of ignorance or the stubborn refusal to accept other ways of human service that appeal more deeply and widely to the needs of these stirring times? To this arrow-like question there can be but one reply—sad as that may be to the hearts and consciences of thousands of Sunday-school and Church-workers.

It must be said, with no unkindly motives or sinister purposes, that the Sunday schools and their workers, for the last twenty-five years, have not measured up to their great opportunities. There is, at hand, one illustration which gives proof enough of the fact. Take the terrible war of recent years and see what moral effect all our religious training of the youth of our land has had. We had to learn with the most unspeakable grief and shame, that the major part of our Sunday-school work proved unable to cope with the awful social scorn and moral irony of that war upon our young men, in the military service of the country. Of the two millions and more young lads we sent abroad to fight, out of our homes, our churches, our Sunday schools, only about five per cent of them remained equal to the phrases, "safe

in morals, strong in social habits, and stable in sacrifice." This small band of soldiers represented our Christian religion and our pronounced Christian ideals.

Such a sad commentary upon our nation's spiritual life must surely arouse in every Christian worker's heart the deepest concern. And all the more so when this startling fact is focused upon our denominational services as in the Sunday schools of the land, it becomes apparent that, in a very generic sense, our spiritual losses have not been met with spiritual gains. This is positively true when thought is riveted upon the vast cosmopolitan population about us from which many additions might be drawn to the ranks of Church and Sunday-school membership, were the spiritual conditions of these organizations ripe for the harvest. Dr. Veach has not missed the truth when he says: "This is the time for action. A long, steady drive will insure success, if every church attains twenty-five per cent net increase. Delay on the part of the Church may mean social revolution." But Dr. Veach has not gripped the entire situation when he forgets that the Sunday schools of today are not the educative institutions they should be. For they have failed in their attempts to make our boys and girls safe in morals, strong in social habits, and stable in sacrifice. No great wonder, therefore, that there are so many defections from them toward worldly pleasures and sins.

Now, if these facts are so vital and point, as they unquestionably do, toward the coming social revolution, what shall be done to stem the onrushing tide of

indifference, worldliness, and churchly neglect, on the part of parents and their children? Must we not offer some panaceas or remedies whereby our youths shall get the right swing toward the future? Shall we not persuade them that something better may be had by them for life and its happiness, than the gratifications of appetite or the building of structures of materiality, or the searchings of stoic philosophies that benumb the soul into defeat?

May not an answer to this perplexing situation lie here? Can we not make an earnest and prayerful effort to define the religious-educational life of our churches and Sunday schools, in terms of real love—in acts of real inspiration—in real atoning sacrifices—and in a winsomeness of spirit that will captivate the souls of men, through the forces of our Sunday schools? I believe that we can overcome the evils—moral and social—of these modern times, through the teachers of Sunday schools, by sympathy, correction, and loving services.

II

THE TEACHER

WE have reached now the more definite form of our subject—the Teacher. And naturally we take up in logical order his personality and self-revelation in his field of services. This method seems perfectly right when we think of his individual or summarized qualifications, and study them alongside of the details of the task he is called to perform.

Hence we begin here with the Teacher, his personality and presence and the qualifications so essential in all Christian work. And this part of our study will undoubtedly include many things. It is of the utmost importance that we should realize this fact. For we must see, if our eyes are not beholden by the affairs of the world, that the final purpose and place of a successful Sunday-school teacher lies in the richness of character, the strength of personality, and in the ability to teach. From this it is clear that teachers are not spontaneously born, nor are they very often self-made. Still, it may be as many have claimed, that frequently splendid teachers are created through inherent qualities of mind and heart dedicated to God and His work. But it has been found for the most part that real Sunday-school teachers are real because

they have been, not only imbued with a high sense of spiritual desires to serve, but they have sensed the drift of their desires and have followed on with every strain of mind and heart, to know and reveal themselves by the power of the Holy Spirit in relation to their work. Here is where they have learned the secret source of success, for allow it to be said, that few teachers are physically, or perhaps more properly, mechanically formed in these days of rigid, exacting humanitarian service. The leaders of our Army and Navy may be constructed in the severe courses of instruction and discipline and the daily routine of performances, but a Sunday-school teacher who faces his own soul and the souls of others through the higher instincts, impulses, and activities of life, is never constructed by any rigid rules of discipline or the services that he may render. He only begins to be a teacher when his sense, or, as the psychologists say, his consciousness of desire to help others dawns upon him and arouses his spiritual and social faculties to meet every call of duty toward others. Here every teacher, either in the public or Sunday schools, must have the start for teaching and real service!

It must, however, be observed that this self-realization while inbred in every true, spirit-born soul, is largely a compound of forces that are joined in making the teacher real to himself and worth while to others. In an estimate, therefore, of the teacher's personality, it is not intended to overlook those inherent, cardinal qualities of intellect and soul, which aid in photographing the man or woman who teaches.

It may be said, as another once wrote in connection with the basic principles of a Sunday-school teacher's life, "Blessed is that Sunday-school teacher in whom there is something finer than anything he says." This looks like the keynote, or rather it seems to be the key that unlocks the treasure-house of a teacher's personal life and endeavours in his Christian work. "Something finer in him," than mere speech or appearance. What can such a little phrase mean or imply in the outline of a teacher's character when living unto himself or when living unto others? Does it not as we may note, cover at once, all the elements of his thinking, his belief, and his eagerness to serve? It must appear so or otherwise the phrase or term self-realization or perhaps personality-at-work, can have but slight meaning to a mind on the normal plain of true being, as every teacher is supposed to have in his living. And therefore, it may be inferred, and rightly too, that when a teacher realizes him or herself, it means that such an one has come to stand on a foundation no man can lay but that is laid in Christ Jesus the Lord. Hence the teacher, knowing and believing this, has no other basis for self and for others—basis for real living—than that which explains to the souls of men the way to true life here and hereafter! And so it comes to pass, that every teacher must believe and believe it sincerely—the truth and love and way of the redemptive foundation in the Saviour whom he is called to present to souls.

There cannot be, therefore, a true exemplification of the office of a real Sunday-school teacher, unless

it has the inspiration and application of a belief that points directly to God in Jesus Christ. A great authority upon this phase of the Christian life and work says: "One cannot be a true worker for Christ without a strong belief in God." How pointedly the matter is put in those words. But how many Sunday-school teachers of today hold to such a testimony? It would be interesting to know. And yet it seems almost inconceivable that any Sunday-school teacher could assume the position of a teacher before a class of boys or girls, men or women, and not look upon Jesus Christ as the Author of salvation and the Finisher of a faith that brings souls home to God.

The same fact may be stated in another way—and with more positiveness without creating any grounds of offense or debate. No one calling himself a teacher —a real teacher—is fit to be a Sunday-school worker, who is unbelieving or sceptical, as to the reality of Jesus and His saving love and power! For, it must be confessed, that no one can teach something he does not believe and does not know. How could he do so, in very reason of the case. Thus it can be seen how utterly impossible it is to lead human life into salvation and peace of soul, without a knowledge of Christ and His way of life. Belief in Jesus, as the Saviour of the soul, belief in Jesus as the Keeper of souls—belief in Jesus as the giver of eternal Life—this must be in the very mind and heart of every Sunday-school teacher who would guide souls unto Him and see them redeemed from sin.

Now, in order to understand this point more fully,

let us give its meaning under several specific statements for illumination.

(a) If one is a real Sunday-school teacher, it means that he has actually accepted Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour. (b) It means that such an one is ever ready to comply with His Law of love. (c) It means that this teacher is serving Jesus because he desires His Master to win many souls unto life. (d) It means that this teacher longs to see peace and happiness among men rather than wickedness, trouble, sorrow, and death. (e) It means that the Golden Rule of love must be the swaying power over the affairs of men everywhere. (f) It means that such a consecrated teacher is looking eagerly for the coming day of a great spiritual democracy when all men shall belong to his Christ.

Such a belief in Jesus will make the Sunday-school teacher very appreciative of the condition of the lost about him. It will spur him to see the hopelessness of those still unredeemed. In other words, the Sunday-school teacher will have the deepest concern for the perishing souls of men. He will love them just as Jesus did, with a passion that seeks and saves unto the uttermost! This feature has full presentation in the chapter—The Teacher's Passion for Souls.

III

THE MIND OF THE TEACHER

WITH the self-revelation of the Sunday-school teacher, we come to his intellectual life or his mental preparation for teaching. This part of our study has its place here because, for the present, our concern must be with the teacher as an instrument in God's hands for service; and since it is believed that He does not use untutored, self-appointed men and women, at this day, any more than He did earlier in the history of the world, to do His work of instructing souls in spiritual things. For these supreme reasons, it is well to see what traits of mind a Sunday-school teacher needs in teaching lives the way unto salvation.

It is true, as great minds have said, that knowledge is power, but Christian knowledge is more than that in the sphere of human life. It is redemptive in its influence and moulding power upon the soul. And this is what a real Sunday-school teacher has within his scope of faith and love, when he is possessed of clear, and spiritualized intellectual gifts, all consecrated to God and to the well-being of men. But, it must be seen, that such light of mind, cannot come of itself, as some poor, ignorant, unsteady disciples of most modern cults imagine. It only comes from sources

beyond all human genius or searching personality. It lies outside of the finest intellectual skill, in its most primary sense, and in its deepest practical form, it may be present before the very eyes of man. In each case it is true that all knowledge of real life,—the ideal spiritual life of the soul,—has no basis in psychological research or methods, but in the heart of the best text Book for the mind of a Sunday-school teacher—the Holy Bible.

It is here where the real, earnest, worthy, successful and efficient Sunday-school teacher must begin the work of preparation for teaching—in the study—careful-prayerful-study—of the Book of God. This Book is the teacher's one indispensable, practical help in his work of saving souls. Without this great Source of intellectual Light, no Sunday-school teacher *can teach*. But how remarkable it seems, in the face of what has been said, that some persons pretend to teach human beings how to live and to die, and yet they are unable to repeat the Ten Commandments, or the Twenty-third Psalm, or even the simple Lord's Prayer—and in fact, were they asked to do so, they could not locate the story of the Deluge, or the terrible tragedy of the Cross, or the Book of Jude. More wonderful is it still, that these same teachers have such strange opinions of their own concerning sin and salvation, that they are ready to substitute any theory of life and love, for the Gift of eternal Life and the soul of Love—the very Christ of God, the offered Son for men's immortal souls! But it must be confessed that none of this self-constructed and self-assertive teach-

ing has ever brought souls into the full light and liberty of life and eternal hope. On the contrary, it is known, that those teachers who have fed their own souls upon the real Bread of Heaven, are the ones who have led men, women, children, into the glorious ways of salvation through the blood of Christ, the Saviour of the world!

It has been so because these teachers have studied the Book. They have not gone on the assumption that they knew the Book when they knew it not. They have known its precepts—they have practised its principles—they have accepted its power—and they have pleaded with the Holy Ghost—its interpreter—for the gifts of wisdom and grace, to teach and to lead souls into the life of God. And thus, they found the Book the best Library of useful information in the world, especially so, in their work of directing wayfaring men and women to heaven. Having found it such an invaluable Book of Light and Truth, they have learned to consult it as a physician does his pharmacopœia for remedies, in his profession of healing the bodies of men. A wise doctor always learns what other wiser and more skillful doctors know and do. A wise Sunday-school teacher always goes to the Book for instruction in dealing with the deep and vital problems of human life!

The Bible, to a Sunday-school teacher, therefore, is, in the largest sense, an infallible guide to truth and salvation. He knows that he cannot miss the way into the temple of immortality, or even pass by the door of salvation, when he searches for them in the Book

of God. There and there alone, is the clear revelation of that unquestionable truth which is essential to redemption. There and there alone is the way to immortal hope and happiness pointed out to the eager souls of men. There and there alone is the distinct, luminous, wonderful, overmastering picture painted of the Man of Galilee Who can save from sin, the lost souls of the world.

If all this be true—and it is true—then there follows but one definite conclusion for any Sunday-school teacher to accept, namely, he must know the Truth that sets men free! He must live that Truth each day before the wondering eyes and hungry souls of those who look to him for spiritual advice and help! How marvelous such a life!

Now, such a Sunday-school teacher will find much —in fact, endless material for use in teaching a Sunday-school class, in this great and inexhaustible Book. The first central fact that he discovers, is the plan of redemption, on every page of the volume. But with that fact, there are so many other beautiful, consoling, uplifting, encouraging, and fascinating subjects or topics to be studied. God has not only revealed therein His Son as our Saviour and the method of His redemptive love, but He has opened for men's souls, the sources of inspiration to live aright, and to have courage enough to face the future. This Book, therefore, is not a narrow, contracted thesis, treating a single subject, as some contend in their abiding stupidity. It is as wide as the universe in its conception of the Truth and in its application of that

same Truth it is as far-reaching as the stretches of eternity. True, it has a deep philosophy of life, but its solutions of its every problem are simple enough for the understanding of a child. It is true, also, that its doctrines are profound—its doctrines of God's love and mercy—its expositions of the Incarnation of the Son of God—and its explanations of Christ's Resurrection from the grave—and yet any one who seeks to learn what these great doctrines mean, may know them in the simplest terms of peace and joy to the soul.

Withal, its narratives of human passion, with its errors, regrets, repentances, and love, are marvels of tragedy, romance, and beauty, and so fascinating to the intellect and heart of man. Its demonstrations of experience, considered by many as too mystical and by others as too fanciful, and by others still as too impracticable—are open enough and safe enough to be believed and applied to life at every angle of its temporary or eternal existence. And its revelations, whether of the inner circle of man's being, or of the narrow entrance into the world of the unknown, or of that life instinct with immortality—are so full and explanatory that he who is willing to believe—simply believe them, can face the ordeals of living here, and can bravely enter the portals of death, without fear, "crossing the bar" with the joy of an eternal morning beaming upon his soul. Who then could refuse to accept such a Book, in every feature of its delineations of character, conduct, and destiny! Who would not be willing to sing with Morris when he sings of the Book—"It taught me how to live and how to die."

But the Bible must be the text-book, first and last, of the Sunday-school teacher, whatever other helps may be considered necessary by him for his work. It is true that some persons do not regard this fact as distinctly proven, for they contend that with the many fine, exhaustive Lesson Helps now available, there is not so much need for the Bible as a text-book. In answer to this, it seems ungenerous to debate the issue, because it is an unfair challenge of the earnest Christian teacher who has the full armour of God, to ask him to spend much time in search of truth at the many second-hand fountains, while the real fountain of spiritual knowledge is his constant supply. The whole matter is put in this way because the Word of God always comes directly to the soul of an earnest Christian teacher, through the Spirit of the living Christ. A Sunday-school teacher like this has the witness of the Holy Spirit in his soul. And this always inspires, helps, and enforces his convictions, and invariably leads to results! Spirit-cultured souls of Sunday-school teachers never fail to win the hearts of the unconverted!

Now, any one who tries to understand the matter at all, can readily see, in the midst of these busy times, that Sunday-school teachers may have time for the study of the Bible. God's Spirit never limits time to a soul in search for real light. His programs of study are set according to eternal hours. He just allows men to study the Book if they will to do it. He helps them to see and understand. He illumines

human belief, He confirms faith, He endorses true mental efforts!

But perhaps it might be well to suggest here to Sunday-school teachers, some feasible ways of studying the Book, in the pressure of other things. There are some very economical methods of study that bring fine results to the busy teacher. For example, there may be the saving of spare moments during each day. These can be used for Bible study. Then by rising just a little earlier in the morning, he can find minutes for study of the Book. Or an hour consecrated out of the night may be a wonderful incentive to this study. Or the sacrifice of some lawful pleasures may bring his soul into more vital touch with the truth as he reads the Book. Through all of these ways and many more like them, a Sunday-school teacher may acquire a vast amount of Scripture truth. The morning verse or the evening text, committed to memory, has proven great intellectual capital to the teacher in Sunday-school work. Or let the thought be put in another way: Suppose the teacher should commit one verse of Scripture each week only to memory—it would mean fifty-two verses in a year. In a life-work of twenty years with Sunday-school pupils, it would mean an intellectual bank account of over a thousand verses. But what of the influence of these verses used during that interval upon the human souls? One cannot estimate the incalculable benefit of such an investment.

The Pocket Testament League has an invaluable suggestion for the Sunday-school teacher in its pledge:

"I hereby accept membership in the Pocket Testament League by making it the rule of my life to read at least one chapter in the Bible each day, and to carry a Bible or Testament with me wherever I go." This is a splendid plan!

But there is another plan for Bible study which may appeal to the Sunday-school teacher. Let it be called the "half-hour study plan": "I promise to devote one half hour daily to Bible study and four half hours per week in addition, to the reading of other books, suitable to the work I am trying to do in the Sunday school." What mighty results would follow this plan if carried out in the spirit of the Master, by prayer, faith, and love! No one can measure the effect it would have upon our Sunday schools and churches.

IV

THE PRAYER-LIFE OF THE TEACHER

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL teacher's intellectual life and his knowledge of the Bible, should have precedence over every other thing in his service to souls. And yet the teacher who has education and much or little information as to the Book, needs to know and live the life of prayer if he would be successful in his work. Education unbaptized with the Spirit of God and uninflamed by a true passion for souls, means but a scant equipment for his great task. The same thing is true of Bible knowledge. For if a Sunday-school teacher has acquired much of the Book, it means hardly anything without Divine sanction and blessing. Those teachers, therefore, who seek the paths of true wisdom must be controlled by something deeper than the simple possession of knowledge of books or things. They must come to the great inspirational power of life for their spiritual strength and support. And that is the prayer-life of the soul.

Now, whatever our definition of prayer may be, it is, after all, the greater factor in a Sunday-school teacher's experiences with the unsaved. Apart from his own personal benefit from the exercise of prayer, it is the mightiest agency in his hands for victory over sin in the hearts of his scholars. S. D. Gordon, in

his book on *Quiet Talks on Prayer,* says that prayer is the golden key that unlocks the great garner of truth. But it is even more than that to the teacher who would win souls to Jesus Christ. It is the key that unlocks human hearts in order that they may receive the truth which sets them free. Wonderful key of truth and life.

The Prayer-Instinct. This part of a Sunday-school teacher's life may be overlooked in a discussion of his methods of work. But it should be considered very carefully because of a special reason. And that is: God intended when He made man in His image, that all men should pray. This very thing was implanted in every soul from the beginning. It is there today in spite of the evil tendencies and propensities of most of us. We are creatures of prayer! And this is especially true, or, at least, it ought to be, with Sunday-school workers and Christians. They, more than anyone else, aside from the ministers of the Gospel, should feel the deep call, out of their souls, to be in constant touch with their God, through the mediation of prayer. This was the "eternal mood" of our Master, whose days and nights were spent in prayer. And if His example is worthy of acceptance, because He realized within His own heart, the appeal of prayer as a necessity in His work of redemption, then why should not we take His method of spiritual advance toward our work of helping souls into eternal life as well?

One thing we certainly should not forget when we think of Him as a Christ of prayer,—His words of

admonition on prayer. "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly"—Matt. 6:6. Nor should we ignore the appeal of Paul, that mighty apostle to the Gentiles, when he says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints"—Eph. 6:18. Both of these great teachers recognized the office and necessity of prayer, as we can readily see.

While we should try to remember their words and others of like sense and meaning as to our prayer-life, we should never forget the deep and inspiring yearnings of our souls as they strive to know God and struggle to bring Him into other lives. Such yearnings never go unsatisfied, if we are ready at all times, to let God answer them. He never fails to come to the hungry heart with spiritual food and drink. It is a most beautiful experience to a Christian. The sweetest thing Jesus wishes to do, and does for us, is at this very point of life.

The Prayer-Habit. With a recognition of the prayer-instinct, there follows the prayer-habit, in the life of a true Christian. On this phase of the subject Mr. Gordon says, "It was not only His habit"—speaking of Jesus—"but His resort in every emergency, however slight and serious. When perplexed, He prayed. When hard pressed for work, He prayed. When hungry for fellowship, He prayed. He chose His associates and received His messages upon His knees. If

tempted, He prayed. If criticized, He prayed. Prayer brought Him unmeasured power at the beginning and kept the flow unbroken and undiminished." Mr. Gordon voices the exact truth about the prayer-habits of Jesus. He gives us a clear vision as to our duty in this respect. Every Sunday-school teacher surely may take heed to these words. For we all know that one of the serious lacks in most lives of today is the continued neglect of prayer. Sunday-school teachers are not any exception to this fact.

And we ask why it should be that they, of all persons, are not bound by strong prayer-habits? In other things of life, like social claims, sleeping hours, working at secular tasks, they are the victims of habits. They are the creatures of many customs and habits, as well as many others. And these cling to us all like the vines on some building. We cannot shake them away from us and our ways of living. And yet, on the other hand, the most beautiful, the most splendid habit one can cultivate, of mind or heart, is that of constant, earnest prayer—prayer under every condition of life. The beauty of such a habit lies in many choice blessings. Just look at some of them for the moment. The prayer-habit brings to the individual Godlike mindedness—it cultivates the heart in real grace—it makes strong the weak spots of the soul—it soothes the tired nerves of the spirit—it transforms character into an angel of love—it clarifies human vision—it changes people and things—it is one of the mightiest factors for right living in the soul of man. To all of this there can be no doubt. Dean Brown,

of Yale, says: "There have been cities without walls, without schools, without markets, without many things that we ordinarily associate with city life, but never a city without its place of prayer. Prayer is a persistent, incurable habit of the race." And so it ought to be with every Sunday-school teacher—a persistent, incurable habit. Surely no one who wishes to be strong in God's power and a rescuer of the lost, would care to ease up the habit or to seek a cure for it. Then, teachers in our Sunday schools, why not pray, pray often, pray believing, pray expecting, pray receiving, but, above all, pray—pray—pray! Get the habit of prayer! *Get it!*

The Prayer-Practice. The wonder grows how many of us know just what it means to practise the art of prayer. We may have the instinct, but instinct in prayer dwarfs into mere spiritual frivolity, when it lies dormant in the soul. The habit of prayer may be ours as well, but if it is not created and sustained in the right way, it becomes a trifling exercise of the mind and heart. The thing every Sunday-school teacher who has the instinct and habit of prayer, needs to do, is to practise them—use them until prayer of itself becomes the fine art of the soul. Such effort brings ideal spiritual conditions to it for service as nothing else will. Just as one needs physical exercise in order to keep his body in healthy and happy relations, so must the Christian teacher use the faculty of prayer for courageous faith and labour among the unredeemed. A great physical culturist who now publishes a number of splendid magazines on bodily cul-

ture, once said that the art of living was only an art to those who knew how to train and master their bodies and their powers. He is correct in this view of mortal life and its tests for real existence. He is doubly correct because his schedule of culture includes every organ and function of the human body. When the great spiritual Teacher spoke of prayer He included in the schedule of prayer the very art of it, for in it every faculty of the soul is involved toward a healthy and happy spiritual life.

The practice of prayer is a wonderful asset of the spiritual life. It takes the stiffness out of religion. It straightens out the snarls and knots in many of our relations. It eases up the strenuousness of our exacting labours. It breaks up the indifferences toward God, the Church, and souls, which we may have. It moulds the heart into gentleness, tenderness, and love! It brightens the eyes of faith and gives the lips of prayer the eloquence of hope. The face itself of the Sunday-school teacher will be indicative of the power of a meditative and prayerful life. The pupils of the Sunday school will discern in his very manner of speech how much he has prayed over their souls. Quoting Mr. Gordon again, we find him saying: "The time of prayer is the time of power. The place of prayer is the place of power." And we dare add to this—the practice of prayer is the practice of a Sunday-school teacher's soul toward his class.

The Prayer-Place. There can be no question as to the necessity and utility of prayer. But there should be no doubt as to the distinct place of prayer. For

it seems no more than right that every soul-winner should have an appointed place in his work where he can meet his God alone—a place made sacred by his dedicated soul and presence—and the presence and power of his Christ in God. And by this statement it is not meant that the place of prayer be entirely material or a mechanical device for solitude or isolation. The idea is that every teacher may have some room or spot chosen as the place of prayer. As the church building is dedicated to the worship of God, so it seems that the soul of the teacher should dedicate a shrine of prayer to its God. In a volume written by me some years ago, but now out of print, I tried to say something like this,—It is evident, if we take the words of Christ, in their fullest intent, that He stressed the place of prayer as much as the need of it. For when He said, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet" and so on, He undoubtedly meant to designate a specific place of prayer.

This conclusion has wonderful illumination in a personal experience of some years ago. During an evangelistic campaign in New England I was entertained in the home of a prominent banker, who had a lovely wife and a sweet little daughter of nine summers. One day as this dear child and I were admiring the beautiful pictures on the walls of the parlor, I happened to step up to Hoffman's *Crowned Head of Christ*. As I did so, she took me by the hand and said with sobs in her voice, "Please do not stand there. It is my papa's kneeling-place." My heart was so deeply touched by her tender words that I at

once inquired what she meant. And this is what I learned. Listen, teacher! This Christian banker had the habit of kneeling there in prayer every night when the household was asleep. At that spot he called upon his Saviour for help, advice, favour, and love. "Beautiful sight"—thought I—"a human talking in the wee hours of the night to his God!"

V

THE TEACHER'S CHURCH CONNECTIONS

IN the previous chapters it was shown that every real, true Sunday-school teacher has devotional qualities of mind and heart. In chapters subsequent it will be clearly proven that such qualities are absolutely necessary in the life, habits, and service of the teacher. For, without them, spiritual success, in reaching the unsaved, is impossible, however much it may be claimed to the contrary. It was said, it will be remembered, that no one can lead another to Christ, through saving truth, when the truth is not consciously known and when Jesus is not in the heart as the personal Saviour. This statement is irrefutable.

It must, therefore, appear from this fact, and most logically so, that the Sunday-school teachers who live the truth of Christ, in their efforts toward saving souls, must be vitally joined to the Christian Church. In view of this truth, it may be said that few soul-winners have power or influence over human lives, who are not identified with the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus, Himself, said so. They must necessarily do their work through organized channels—the recognized Christian bodies—the evangelizing agencies of God in the world, known as the visible Church.

In the first place, it will be interesting to note under Scriptural interpretation, what it means for a Sunday-school teacher to be in intimate connections with the Church. Such essential things as conversion, and the public acknowledgment of Christ, and then the steps taken by him in uniting with the Church—and the obligations assumed in that union—these are some of the important matters to be considered here. They ought to be clearly understood because there is some ground for believing that many Sunday-school teachers have gone into their work without knowing what a union with the great Church implies.

(a) Take then the important step of conversion. Should a Sunday-school teacher be converted before he begins to teach in the school? This is a strange question to ask without a doubt, and yet it is known that oftentimes Sunday-school teachers have been drafted into service who have never had the gift of God's grace upon them through regeneration, or the initial step of conversion. And what have such unconverted teachers shown by their lives and services? The answer must be in the words of the hymn: "Nothing but leaves, nothing but leaves." How necessary it is, therefore, that those who expect to teach in the Sunday schools, of the Church, should know the power of God unto salvation—should have the true baptism of the Holy Spirit—should be deeply impressed with the sense of the sacredness of the cause to be represented—should be intensely willing to incarnate in their lives the life of the Master, the Saviour of souls.

(b) This means, then, in fact, that the Sunday-school teacher has had experimental knowledge of salvation, has come into vital fellowship with Jesus Christ, and is now able and willing to let the Light so shine, that men may see His good works and glorify the Saviour of the world. This experimental knowledge, however, has fourfold significance in the life and love of such a teacher. 1. It gives him a recognized or unique standing in his work, both in the Church and in the Sunday school. 2. It makes him a strong defender of the faith of the saints in the Church. 3. It makes him a dignified and trusted leader among men. 4. It makes him also a mighty exponent of the truth that sets men free. And this is just what the Christian Church needs today—not only within its own precincts as a spiritual factor but out in the world,—the very bravest, the very cleanest, the very best Christians are needed to defend and protect the name, character, and honour of Jesus Christ and His Church.

(c) From all of this, it seems clear that such Sunday-school teachers, being members of the Church, will be its staunchest supporters, in the way of attendance upon its ordinances, its services, and its activities. In fact, as another writer has said: "No Sunday-school teacher who fails to attend church-worship, in every one of its appointments, when able, is worthy to assume the position of a teacher." This Christian man is right in his opinion although his analysis of the relation of such a teacher to the Church may be severe, or seem rather critical for these times. Still,

when his words are taken with the spirit of love, they show several startling things. 1. A Sunday-school teacher who does not attend faithfully upon Church duties, cannot be depended upon for other things. This has been the conclusion of those who have examined into the records of careless, indifferent, non-attending Sunday-school teachers. 2. Then a teacher who comes only to Sunday school and denies the right of the Church to a part of his time and services, is not a true church member, nor even an example of faith in the work he is trying to do for souls. In other words, he is belying his profession as much as the miserable Pharisees of olden times to whom the Church was only an expediency for the display of pride and purpose. 3. Besides what kind of an example is it to boys or girls, men or women, when a Sunday-school teacher ignores the Church while assuming to teach them the Kingdom of God? Can such an example be a winning one? What must the answer be? Who would dare to say that such a teacher's inconsistency has the approval of God! No one could say so with truth for it is known that in almost every instance where such teachers attempted their work of spiritual instruction, they have failed and their classes have fallen into ruin.

It thus appears that in the spiritual and devotional life of the Church, the Sunday-school teachers as well as the officers of the school, must take the lead in influencing the children, young people, and adults, to share in that important phase of Church-work.

(d) And so, there is another factor to be noted here. The Sunday-school teacher must also be loyal to his Church at every point of its mission. Perhaps this is a narrowing down of the matter to a mere trifling sentiment, rather than to the safe teaching of the Master on the relation of a Christian to His Kingdom. But it is not a sentimental consideration at all. It is most of all a statement of what every Sunday-school teacher should keep in his heart—a robust conviction that the Church of Christ is a divine organ of Heaven through which he can help to bring the message of salvation to men. In this sense the Church stands for a symbolization of that message but in the greatest practical form possible. This is God's wonderful method of presenting His saving truth to men. God has included in this method the living factors of saved men who must show what that heaven-sent message can do for souls. Here the Sunday-school teacher has the opportunity of his life to demonstrate his belief in Jesus and his love for Him, by supporting His Church, in its thought, its time, its prayer, its financial efforts, and in its utmost services.

Of a truth it is known that a loyal spirit on the part of a Sunday-school teacher must circumscribe, out of the many things he can do, a great sacrifice of love, time, patience, prayer, energy, and vision. Few are willing to make such a sacrifice today for the Church. It is, alas, too true. And yet it must be seen that the weakest point of the modern Christian Church is the half-hearted service given it by many of its so-

called supporters. And nowhere is this more apparent than in the Sunday schools. For this reason, if for no other, the feature of loyalty to the Church should be emphasized again and again. The whole thing has come to pass after this way. So many of the Sunday-school teachers and officers of our churches have concluded that when the sessions of the schools are done, their privileges are open to any services of the Church. In other words they believe, in many cases, that they are fulfilling their spiritual responsibilities when they do their bits in the Sunday school. Instead of urging their classes to attend upon public worship, or setting an example to them by going themselves, they not infrequently slip away, go home, or follow upon some pleasure-call or idle the rest of the holy day in other ways. This form of Christian living toward the Church is entirely—positively—and absolutely wrong —unchristlike—and the meanest kind of disloyalty to the Christ they assume to interpret and offer to the unsaved. No Sunday-school teacher guilty of such infidelity toward His Church, can be counted worthy of his Master's blessed words—"Well done!"—nor can such a teacher hope to share, at last, in the joy of those who have brought their sheaves to His feet. If such teachers were filled with the Holy Spirit, they could not render such half-hearted, half-performed, and half-dedicated services to Jesus their loving Lord.

(e) Then a true Sunday-school teacher—the kind of Church member we have tried to describe—will also pray for strength and love in his work. He will

ask God for a great blessing upon his church. He will daily pray for its interests and activities, for the pastor and the people connected therewith, and in particular, for those outside of it that they may be saved. What a vast field of consideration this must be! Dr. Brewbaker writes on this subject like a man who knows: "No person is really fitted to be a true Sunday-school worker," he says, "unless he love the church sufficiently to spend much time in prayer in its behalf." How concise, how rebuking these words! What a challenge to the prayerless worker in the Sunday school, teacher or lay! But his words are true. No logic or sophistry can argue them away for the conviction comes very strongly that many Sunday-school teachers are not praying teachers, if spiritual results are taken as measures of their successes.

(f) There is, however, another feature of a Sunday-school teacher's life to be added here—his real support of his church in a material way. His financial aid must be part of his service. Of course this side of his labour does not come as a primary thing, but it does have strong relations to his church. For it is well known that churches cannot exist without the material support of their people. And this fact is vital in a Sunday-school teacher's program of service, because his standard of giving or paying to God's cause, has great educational value either for good or otherwise upon the minds of scholars. It is true, indeed, that his purse has close relations to the purses of the class. If he gives little and gives it grudgingly the

class will soon give after the same fashion. For penny Sunday-school teachers usually have penny classes and penny classes make penny churches. And worse than it all—a penny church has penny influence in the locality where it strives to save souls.

How should a Sunday-school teacher give? Read I Cor. 16:2 and Deut. 8:18. These are hints.

VI

THE TEACHER'S SOCIAL LIFE AND HABITS

ONE of the finest assets of a real Sunday-school teacher is his social ideas and habits. Of course he is expected to be a Christian—a truly converted man or woman as the case may be. But such a teacher must also be a social being, in accordance with the social spirit and message of the Master, who gave the Christian Church a great program of social love and service when He said: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another"—Jno. 13:34. With emphasis of stronger import He added another sentence: "As I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

He made this law of love the basis of His social message. Without a discussion of it, there is only one view to be taken of it here as applied to Sunday-school teachers. While their love must be normal as human love is, yet, if the statement may be allowed, their love should actually be abnormal, so to say—because human love prompted by humanitarian impulses or scruples, or even by the deepest sympathies of the heart, is not enough to fulfill the law of the spiritual life. It must, therefore, be love baptized with Divine love—such love as measures itself alongside of the love that Christ had for men—to the undoubted

end of their salvation. Hence love that loves and wins souls unto everlasting life.

Now, in view of this, a Sunday-school teacher's life should be impelled by the spirit of his religious belief and convictions, but it should be applied to the lives of others through his best social qualities, all-imbued by love.

(a) From this statement we are naturally led to consider a Sunday-school teacher's personal appearance and manners as well as his conduct towards others as a soul-winner. A teacher's " walk and conversation " has everything to do with his attraction of scholars and their permanent sticking purposes in the school. Some Sunday-school instructors do not seem to regard this feature as of much importance. But, it is true, without question, that the personal appearance and manners of a Sunday-school teacher, figure most largely in the attempts to draw boys and girls and to hold them firmly to their respective classes. Appearance in dress or looks or attitude of life, does count immensely in the eyes of the young and even in the estimation of older people. Men and women very frequently judge teachers or leaders by outward displays or appearances of themselves and aims. All this may be a grave error on their part. And yet it is so, whether right or wrong in principle or purpose. A Sunday-school teacher, therefore, can well afford to have much consideration for self, especially as to appearance and social manners.

What is said here does not apply to the superficialities of polish or appearances of some Sunday-school

teachers seen so frequently in our schools. There are such teachers who have too much use for paint, powder, and the veneers of society—whose shallow adornments of person are simply an abomination, whose odours of dress are of the cheap ten-cent store variety, and whose social manners are from the shop stalls of the business world. Allow it to be said here that paints, powders, and showy dress, do not attract except perhaps curiously the eyes of a few silly men who would rather see " folly girls " in Sunday schools than gentle, kindly, polished, winning teachers before their boys and girls. Shame on their visions and ignoble wishes! It is, indeed, a great mistake on the part of any Sunday-school teacher to follow the " peacock style of dress and the blue-jay mode of speech " in the work of winning the senses and souls of children to Jesus Christ and His Church.

What is said here of the women teachers in our Sunday schools is just as true of the men who follow the same customs or have the same habits. There are male teachers in many of our Sunday schools who have vulgar habits that violate the decency of good Christian people. They tell nasty stories, they use tobacco, and they engage in sports of every questionable kind. All these things surely count against a Sunday-school teacher's influence, however sporty or worldly it may seem to be to the unregenerate minds of others.

A venerable English Sunday-school worker said: " Every Sunday-school teacher who is a true Christian, ought to be also a true gentleman or gentlewoman, first in spirit and then in manners, and this

gentleness, courtesy, refinement will be a mighty power for good over the minds and hearts of the young. Let the teacher willingly sacrifice for Christ any habit or indulgence which will tend to make him less agreeable to his charge and thus diminish his influence. Let even such external matters as dress be regulated by Christian principle; let his breath redolent of drink or clothes perfumed with tobacco have no place in the Sunday-school class." (Dr. W. H. Graser, in his *Sunday School Teacher's Manual.*)

(b) With his personal appearance and manners assured, the Sunday-school teacher must learn everything he can about the social conditions wherein he is expected to do his best work. For he cannot do his best work without an intimate knowledge of the home-life and surroundings of the boys and girls who are to be saved and trained for the Christian Church. How can he " feed the lambs " and then ask them to " follow after him " if he never comes into the radii of their trials, temptations, and troubles, or their daily habits of living in this wicked world. In order, therefore, to be able to transform them into beings of light and love, he must go where the " lambs " and " goats " are and he must take them just as he finds them.

And this means more than the average or ordinary Sunday-school teacher can surmise—it means a profounder study of social conditions than many teachers are ready to assume. And yet it may be said for their encouragement, that there is no reason for any of them to fear the task. If the approach to the problems be made fearlessly and with a desire to be of real service,

the effort will not be futile nor unconvincing. It can always be made at the doors of the boy's or girl's social life—at the entrance of any young person's accustomed ways, at home, at school, or at the place of service, or at the base of their recreations.

The keen and wide-awake social teacher will not wait for the scholar to discover himself. The wise teacher will find him where he is, take him at his own value, and then strive to lead him to the higher values of love and life. And so the teacher must be an investigator in a sense—a seeker for the diamonds in the rough—a creator of the ideal life in young manhood and womanhood.

Here the strong, winning social quality of pity, sympathy of the teacher enters into the play of saving souls. And it must be genuine pity and sympathy to be of real service—to be of practical help to those who need help. Cold-handed offers of pity—cold-hearted pleas of sympathy, in aiding any boy or girl, who is blue or discouraged, or hardened by home and worldly conditions, will never attract nor save them. It must be warm-hearted, soul-touching sympathy for them, and at the very point where they yearn for friends—where they hope to obtain relief from the things that disturb them and make them so unhappy.

It may be asked then how a Sunday-school teacher can extract " the milk of kindness " from the souls of boys or girls, men or women, when his own heart has only the " dog-in-form " affection, given in doses too uncertain and spasmodic, for any poor souls to take? He cannot win in that way, the favour or confidence

or love of any child, boy, girl, man or woman. It is simply impossible from the very nature of the case.

Take a typical case to the point: It is the story of a poor boy in a home of the most unfavourable conditions socially and morally. His father was a terrible drunkard and his mother wicked beyond degrees of the commonest reserve and decencies. The details of the picture can easily be imagined. But this boy in consequence, had little to spur him on to better or higher things, it can readily be seen. The Sunday-school teacher who discovered him and his forlorn family, put herself, at once, into his position, or at least, she sought to create the belief in his heart that she knew about him and that she pitied him so because of his unhappy life. She was in no sense patronizing nor mechanical in her advances to his soul. He soon learned that she loved him and then deep trust in her love made him listen to her words of hope. He now begun to seek her advice and help. Soon he found her a true friend and one upon whom he could place his dependence for spiritual guidance into higher things. Then the hour came when she led him to her Christ. After this there came the most wonderful miracle of the whole affair. This very saved boy, by his faith and love and passion for souls like his own was once, prayed his father and mother into the Kingdom of Heaven and the Christian Church. Oh, to be able to lead just three souls to Jesus into salvation, through sympathy—through love—through a willingness to know them and see them redeemed! Is that not enough to make the soul of a Sunday-school

teacher burn with the fires of self-denial, self-sacrifice, and consecration? Oh, to be able to lead a class of ten or more boys and girls to the truth that sets them free from sin and gives them Jesus Christ as their everlasting Saviour and heaven as their eternal home —what can such social ecstasy be in a Sunday-school teacher's heart when he sees it all? Wonder of wonders! This is social redemption!

But let the Sunday-school teacher go one step more. In the social programs of our Sunday schools many problems come up for solution. And they must be solved in connection with the spiritual services of the church, if the church is to be the earthly home of saved men and women and children. The church and its life must be coördinated with the home life of people. This fact becomes evident when home conditions of boys and girls, men and women, their educational advantages, their recreational hours, their protection against vice, their moral and social surroundings—are made primal in Christian thought and purpose. They may seem outside of Sunday school or church work to some persons who know little about social services. But they are not separate demands at all from real practical Christian work. They belong to the task of the church, just as much as night is a part of the day.

(c) But back of a Sunday-school teacher's sympathetic nature, there must be the spirit and sincerity of a purpose. His social habits and conduct must be such that scholars will not hesitate to accept his kindly offices—will not doubt his words—and will not refuse

to receive his teaching of God's love and salvation. If scholars get any other vision or feeling as to a teacher's purpose than that of his absolute desire to bring them to the right side of life, they will gradually shy away and soon be gone, having lost all confidence in their leader. This is but natural, for after all, what is the husk to a hungry soul? And is it not more of husk than grain an insincere teacher gives the class when he adopts the social forms of the world to obtain their interest and love? When, therefore, a Sunday-school teacher seeks the methods of the social world for food to the souls of the class—foods like feeds, shows, outings, and other fantastic things, he can only expect temporary results, for all such things are expediencies to an end, although the end may be elsewhere than in the church. The real *thing* is not present—the *thing* that holds the class to the highest and best for time and eternity!

(d) With his sincerity of purposes, the Sunday-school teacher must use his common sense in helping the class to the noblest and ideal in life. Sense—good old-fashioned sense—horse-sense as it is sometimes called—such sense of soul as men and women who know life and its needs, can apply to themselves for their moral and spiritual development and benefit, for their comfort and joy. God has supreme use for such teachers and He calls them continually into His work, because He realizes that the great art of common sense is a better method of setting the world right than the hundred nameless fads of culture and plays of foolish-

ness which so many misguided, twisted well-meaning folks aspire to teach and practise today.

(e) And then with a Sunday-school teacher's sense there must go the strength of a genial, tender, sympathetic sacrifice of self. Here is the true basis of the social life of the teacher who would woo and win souls to salvation. So few, indeed, have these social qualities—geniality, tenderness, and compassion—and yet they are the words found in the vocabulary of a true Sunday-school worker whose heart and soul have been profoundly touched by the Saviour's example, and his sacrifice unto death on the Cross. How much, therefore, the smiling, generous-hearted, soul-yearning teacher can do with poor, down-trodden, sin-laden lives! No one can measure the incalculable effect of a sweet smile—of the gripping handshake—of the pat-on-the-shoulder—of the gentle gaze into the eyes—of the loving word of welcome and cheer—of the arm-around-the-neck—of that teacher upon the boy or girl! Beyond all guess or sentiment is the wonderful but suggestive heart to heart talk—the heart to heart interest—that confiding personal appeal of the teacher to the hungry souls of the class. Here lay the secret of the Master's power over men! The common people heard Him so gladly—they followed Him longingly—and they accepted Him savingly—all because He knew how to satisfy their hunger and thirst of soul!

VII

THE TEACHER'S PASSION FOR SOULS

WE have come now to the most vital fact—to the very heart of our study—a Sunday-school teacher's passion for the unsaved! And we ask who can be equal to its meaning? Who can understand that love which yearns for those perishing through sin? Who can describe the agony of that love in its efforts to save them? And who can picture the joy of such love as it sees them saved forever! Oh, love, that will not let them go! Oh, love, that blossoms red for their never-dying souls!

Let us not hasten through this theme. Let us give ourselves to it in the deepest thought and with the sweetest prayers! Let us see how we can measure our lives and love besides those who need a Saviour's gift of everlasting life! But let us hasten to confess that there is nothing more sacred or beautiful in a Christian's experience than the service of wooing and winning men from sin. Can we think of anything so sublime or so noble as the *act of a soul* winning another soul—your or my soul bringing a soul to Christ—your soul or mine—loving a soul from death unto life!

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to

righteousness, as the stars forever and ever"—Dan. 12:3. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise"—Prov. 11:30. "Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins"—James 5:20. "Beautiful words! Glorious words! Wonderful words of life!"

A Soul Seeking a Soul. (a) Compared to all other forms of human service, there never has been anything so beautiful as the *reach* of a redeemed soul for another soul. It stirs the mind with the profoundest wonder when one thinks of the men and women who are going forth, with eagerness, into the vast field of life, for the lost. And it brings the supremest rapture—indeed, it is altogether proper to say—it brings an intoxication—an ecstasy of unbounded joy—when sinners come home to Christ through the love and labours of other redeemed souls! Jesus recognized this when He declared that joy reigned among the angels in heaven over repentant sinners, brought back through human agencies.

One can just imagine what it must be to a mother whose child has been lost! Her agony of mind, her ache of heart, her despair of soul—there are no words for such a grief and sorrow! And yet one can also imagine what her joy must be when the child is restored to her arms. Small wonder that she smothers that child with kisses and tears. Small wonder, too, that she murmurs, between sobs and heavings of breast, "My baby was lost but is found." On that bosom

which suckled it, in that heart which loved it, in those arms that nursed it, the child is safe, restored, her baby saved!

(b) But see how that soul must feel which has found a nesting place of welcome in another soul. Did man—did any of you—ever know such an experience? If you did, then you can realize how you felt when you followed another out into sin, and after a brief or longer period, amidst persuasions, supplications, or entreaties, or perhaps supreme efforts, you brought him or her back to sanity and safety, and like our beloved household poet has sung—You placed the rescued one into the " Round-tower of your heart."

After all was it not the search—the chase, so to speak, after the Golden Fleece—and the lost one—the wandering soul—that stimulated and urged you on—that fed you on food you never knew—that gave you courage to win—that even crowned your utmost wish with almost supernatural power! And this was wondrously though especially true, as you may recall, in the case of your own mother or father, brother or sister, or some dear friend. You could not sleep when you thought of them. You could not eat when you knew how they were starving for the Bread of Life. You had neither rest of mind nor ease of heart when you believed that it was your Christian duty to aid in their salvation. And when they came to Jesus through you, then you knew what joy meant—what sacrificial love means—what real love means toward our loved ones who are redeemed!

(c) You are conscious, too, that the search you

made for those lives was neither so long nor so arduous for your soul. The wings of the morning were never too big to hide them from your eager eyes. The uttermost parts of the earth were not too distant to hold them from your ever-growing spirit of search. And the depths of perdition were not deep enough for your passionate love to abandon them to their fate. Oh, no, it was an intense search; a search without let until they were yours—and Christ's.

To the very day of his death, over many anxious, weary years, did the father of Charlie Ross look for his stolen boy. But at last, dying, with a broken heart, and murmuring out of the depths of his grief and the ocean of his sorrow, over his beloved one, he said: "I shall find him yet." And he will find him, for, thank God, eternity secretes nothing from the searching eyes and the broken hearts of the redeemed and their imperishable, hungry love!

(d) In this search of the soul, it is not the sin, or the scornful rejection of the truth or love, that hinders, but rather urges the seeking soul to greater endeavour. Nor does the seeker for the lost spirits of this world, measure their worth or value in dollars and cents, but from the point of their hopelessness, failures, and sins. Every ounce of pity, every form of mercy, every show of sympathy, and every token of love is evoked upon the lost one—and his hopeless despair and coming death. It is, indeed, a case—perhaps legally phrased—of direst suffering and passionate love—paying the penalty of evil and wrong until the debt is all paid. And so was it with Jesus as He

paid humanity's debt of love on the Cross. But even before the Cross had broken His body and heart, He took into His soul the one lost, with the ninety-and-nine unforgotten, though He left them safe in the fold. And did He not say that He had come to find sinners rather than the righteous who were saved?

(e) The seeker for souls should never cease to seek them until they are found. "Seek and ye shall find," said Jesus. But when He spoke those words He had in mind the fact that there could not be any relaxation or cessation of effort on the part of the one searching, until the souls of those unborn, perishing, are forever safe at home with their God in full redemption. Nothing less than this can satisfy the demands of heaven! Nothing less than a passionate, persistent, patient, prayerful, seeking can answer the challenge of the unrescued soul in its utmost disgrace and despair. This is the four-square career of the soul-winner. He burns with a loving desire to find the lost and to see them restored to God's favour—never once ceasing until they are brought into Christ's heart; using every fair, frank, and fearless method to persuade men and women that Jesus is willing and ready to save them to the uttermost.

What an effort it must have been—an unbroken task—for one man to bring to Jesus Christ four hundred and ninety-nine souls in one year! And what a persistent stroke of spiritual love to go after one man fifty-four times, under most difficult straits sometimes, until the unsaved one had to exclaim, "If you love my soul so much that you will continue to come

for me as you have done, I shall yield to your pleas and to your Christ." Not seventy times seven—but only fifty-four times did the seeker go and then he found Him! And yet, after all, what did he do as compared with the other seeker who brought to Jesus eleven hundred men within the space of less than five years! He was once a terrible drunkard but Jesus saved him through a pastor. Think of it! He put his redeemed soul against eleven hundred unredeemed souls—and he won them all! Incredible—impossible—ah—question not the power of God in a truly saved life! Such a life can do the miraculous with the unsaved!

How often we do fail here, it must be confessed, because we lack the fervour of desire, or are too easily discouraged over the stubbornness or foolishness of souls, so steeped in worldly things and sin; or we are not filled with the spirit of charity or forgiveness. Jesus failed, too, to get men into His Kingdom, though He mingled mercy with judgment, and had a passion for them of the gentlest and unfailing sort. In spite, oftentimes, of His tender solicitude and pleas, they would not come to Him for life. If He did not always draw men out of sin to Himself, it was not because He was not loving, but because their hearts were so hard that even deathless love could not save them. A Sunday-school teacher's love must be like his Master's if he would win, but he must never forget that not all men will heed his pleas nor follow after his Christ. Many may be called by him but few may

arise and go home to his Saviour. This is the sad side to his saving work.

A Soul Saving a Soul. (a) Here comes the supremest joy to the soul-winner—the consciousness that he has won a soul to Christ. Let us fancy for a moment, if we can, that we are directing or accompanying a soul almost defeated or lost, on its way to Jesus. It seems all but conceivable that a human being, with its redeemed powers, could take in hand another and succeed in bringing such an one into the light of truth and life of love through the blood of Christ. Does it not look like the last desperate attempt to rescue that life from eternal death? It surely does. And yet, it must not be forgotten that a soul is being dealt with —something different from anything else. Not a lost coin—not even a lost sheep! They may be found as Jesus said. And what is a coin of silver or gold or a sheep though lost in the house or on the mountains bleak and bare, as compared with a lost soul? A comparison like this is really an insult to our thoughts about souls. A lost soul, no, not simply a lost soul—but tremendously more sad than that—*a losing soul*—a soul completely losing out for eternity. Into the very despair and desperateness of such a loss, the soul-winner plunges to save it. How fearful, how terrible, how reckless, it might seem, to grasp the last chance at getting into safety that poor struggling soul! Still think of it—suppose that soul is lost after all the efforts to save it?—and you are the loser! Can you measure the sorrow, the grief, the regret of your own soul over such a failure? You never can, when you

think of the one who has perished through you! And then think, too, of the one who is lost! What must it mean to a soul lost forever!

(b) The task of saving a losing soul must involve all of love—heroic love—love so unselfish—love so unmingled with fear—love so daring and masterful—that nothing can deter it from winning the trophy of soul. Nothing can stand in the way of getting that soul out of danger and of bringing it to the safety zone of eternal life. Such love as this means suffering—means even that death itself is cheap alongside of the soul. But it is true—ever has been so in the history of redemption—that souls are only brought to Jesus through vicarious sacrifices. This has been the written law of the Kingdom of Heaven! It was so recorded in the Bosom of God when the first blow of sin fell upon the hearts of the first children of the first Paradise. It was so engraved, in letters of blood, upon the heart of the typical man who has stood for perfect manhood and the ideal life of every soul in the white robes of redemption.

(c) It is sacrifice, costly sacrifice, that brings souls into higher and nobler relations to an eternal world. The law of real Christian service has its right to be where sacrifice begins and ends. And it only begins where the lover of souls thinks more of other souls than his own, and it ends where his soul has become poor that other souls may be rich in the gifts of eternal life. The Sunday-school teacher is not rich in spiritual things until he has become poor for someone else. Whatever the cost may be, no Sunday-

school teacher can for a moment believe that a class of boys or girls may be saved without sacrifice. Their souls are not brought to Jesus without the price of a broken heart or the expenditure of the treasure of blood. And this is not too great a sacrifice to make for them. It is no more than a mother makes for her child when it is born. It is no more than the hero makes when he dies for his flag. And it is no more than Jesus made Himself when He gave all He had for the world's souls.

(d) Love must, therefore, die vicariously for the boy or girl to be saved. They cannot be saved in any other way. This great fact was illustrated some years ago by an educated, Christian Chinaman. He was a graduate from Yale Divinity school with the keynote of his life set to the words, "Do for others what Christ has done for you." He was a man of few words, but his silent and persistent effort to live true to his Master made him a power among his fellows. He had been to America on a visit after a number of years, and now on his return, the ship upon which he sailed, came into a mighty storm and foundered on the rocks off the Chinese coast. As a Christian he offered the captain and crew of the sinking ship, to carry a line to the shore, saying, "I must do for the crew what Jesus has done for me."

There seemed but little chance of success, but with a daring of soul that charmed the captain and his crew into profound admiration, he fastened the rope about his body and leaped into the boiling sea. After a terrific struggle with the lashing waves, he reached the

steep cliffs, only to find himself exhausted. But he realized then that his task was not done—his sacrifice was not complete. So he fastened himself between two great rocks, his body holding the rope while the crew passed one by one over it into safety. When his broken body was released they heard him say with his dying breath: "*I only did for you what Jesus did for me.*"

Now, when Sunday-school teachers are willing to suffer and die in this vicarious sense, for their classes, their deeds of devotion, self-sacrifice, will become the spiritual capital for the future life of the Church and the world. It was once said that the blood of the martyrs became the life of the Church. It is just as true today as it was then. It may be another way of saying that the red currents of sacrifice and the tides of vicarious love are the rich and ripe treasures for the coming generations to live by. All this shows that the wealth of the world's goodness and hope must be paid for with corresponding riches of love and blood. And this *is* the great law, governing the life, love, and character of a true, ideal Sunday-school teacher.

A Soul Sealing a Soul. But this law of love's sacrifice has one more thing to do. It must seal the souls found and saved unto their God with the seal of eternal life. Or like the bride and groom sealing their vows of fidelity with the highest tokens of their love when they plight themselves to each other in the unbreaking bonds of wedlock. So does the soul-winner bind himself to other souls with the seal of his affection and helpfulness. He must seal them just as the four

angels of Revelation sealed the servants of God, in their foreheads—Rev. 7:3-4. The true Sunday-school teacher has the same command upon his soul—being asked of Christ, to gather those and to keep them, to whom is given life eternal because of His effort to save them. And this is the Scriptural way of saying to such a teacher, how he must grip into his very soul the soul of every member of his class, how with the deepest love of his heart he must woo them more and more to better things, and how with an iron purpose of service, he must constantly aid them toward the ideal of Christian faith and living.

The aim, therefore, of every Sunday-school teacher should always be under the inspiration and impulse of the words "sealed unto full redemption in Christ Jesus." This should ever be the motive force—the stirring incentive—the push behind the effort of the teacher in reaching the lost—and to get them where they can be free forever from sin and its terrible consequences. In this Jesus will help the consecrated teacher. The Holy Ghost will guide him!

VIII

THE TEACHER'S LOVING TOUCH

IN the previous chapter we considered some of the great elements of soul-winning. Here we are to be introduced to the secret passage that brings us directly to the most difficult things of every soul—the core of personality—or the seat of conscious life where actions determine station and destiny. How to approach that center of power with the correct message—how to win a place within its confidence—how to influence it in the right direction—and how eventually to see it dedicated to God, in faith and love and in sacrifice—that is the task to be performed.

(I) The best thing to do here with this difficult problem, is to fall back on Jesus Himself. He knows how to solve it. He can bring to the Sunday-school teacher the exact interpretation of the "loving touch," or tell him the way of approach to the soul. He begins by telling His disciples that He would make them fishers of men. They could understand His words in the actions of their own, as catchers of just ordinary fishes in the Galilæan sea. Peter and John had no need of instruction in that line, for they were expert fishermen. They knew the game so well that they could select the very place and time for a great catch of fish. And they never failed to get fish, save once, when they fished all

night but caught none. That experience did not change the mind of Jesus, however, toward their skill in fishing. Still He knew that they could not fish for men without knowledge and experience born of the Spirit of God. He had had that test of spiritual insight and purpose more than once and He could impart to them how to get into men's hearts and how to win them to salvation. And so He strove to bring them, step by step, through illustration, statements, actions, miracles, to the point where they themselves could become real finders and leaders of souls.

Now just as those disciples of Jesus had to learn the way to win men to their Master, so must every Sunday-school teacher learn the lesson—through the hard steps of consecration, information, impartation, and captivation—four essential things in a successful teacher's work. These steps are meant to cover what is indicated by the phrase, "the loving touch."

(a) *Consecration,* for the task of winning souls! What does this mean? It can mean only one thing in any true teacher's life. It must mean that such a teacher is under the spell of a complete surrender to the will of God and His purposes in saving the lost spirits of men. This first step is so vital to a Sunday-school teacher's work that it cannot be overlooked. His powers and influence as a teacher, whatever they may include of mind, social habits, or church life, must be subject to God's desire, to His Son's objective plan—the redemption of the world. And this signifies that every real, true, winning Sunday-school teacher is fully and absolutely under the reign of Christ's re-

deeming love and within the enthralling hands of the divine Spirit of the living God. This is the twofold thing he must have if he would win souls to Christ and His Church!

(b) He must also be willing to know how to come (as has been said in part in an earlier chapter) within the circle of each human life. His immediate, practical aim, therefore, must be to discover the hearts of his pupils, and then get them to the light of truth as it is in Jesus.

(c) This double dealing fact of imparting the truth as it is in Jesus, and that of self-giving, must grip the very soul of the Sunday-school teacher. For he cannot fish for souls though his outfit may be never so perfect, according to his view, unless he give himself to the whole act of their rescue. Here it is shown that the fisherman is of far more importance in the catch of fishes than the appliances used. In approaching the unsaved, therefore, it is positively necessary that the Sunday-school teacher offer his own life, love, and soul as the strong inducements or incentives to them to become followers of Jesus Christ. The point here is this: Men will not be rescued from sin or from spiritual death, if those who seek them are unwilling to enter into their lives vitally and sacrificially. They must understand that these worldly minds are only asking them to do what Christ did when He called them to Himself by the mighty Spirit, transformed them into beings of love and hope. That is all they wish. But this is the center of it all. Hence it seems, from Christ's own way of reaching men, that a Chris-

tian teacher cannot cleanse the lepers, make the lame to walk, open blinded eyes, feed the hungry, or raise the dead, if he, himself, has not submitted to the process of redemption under the direct ministry of Christ's love and hands. His eyes have to be opened, his leprosy of sin has to be cleansed, his hungriness of soul has to be removed and his deadness in trespasses and sins has to be taken away by the living Saviour, before he can know full salvation. And what does such an experience impart to his soul? Can it be explained in words or sentiments? Can it be told to a Sunday-school class by its teacher with clearness enough to bring them to salvation? Ah, it cannot be told in words nor in sentiments, but it can be lived in the richness of services and in the fragrance of pure, unselfish love—love that loves unto death!

(d) Now, all this seems necessary if the Sunday-school teachers would captivate or capture in their Gospel-nets the souls of their boys and girls. For it is true now as it was in Christ's day, that more souls are caught (so to speak) with the bait of a human life than with the traps and agencies that so many of the modern churches employ for the capture of men. The dying lad in one of our hospitals stated the case precisely when he said: "I want people and not things." The world of unsaved men, women, and children is looking, not for gold, wood, hay or stubble, but for living, loving men who are ready to live as they love and love as they live. "Ah," said the Chief of ten thousand Africans in the heart of that benighted land, Africa, to the American missionary, "not what you

are preaching is going to make us Christians. No. It is the way you love us that is making us believe in your Christ." The love of a soul must win a soul. The love of a saved soul must save a soul. There is no other way. Many people whose religious instincts and desires are not deep may think differently, but they are surely wrong. For it has been proven so often that golden chariots of culture, downy beds of easy philanthropy, Pullman coach religion, and rapid-transit fliers of higher thought, have never saved a soul from sin or death. They are the simple devices of an evil spirit for misleading poor, uncultured, misguided humanity. The Sunday school which uses them is surely doomed to be defeated in its efforts toward saving souls!

(e) But the "loving touch" has a still higher meaning to the consecrated self-giving Sunday-school teacher. It bears on the point of real contact. In other words, it refers to the teacher who seeks and finds the point of contact in a soul-clue to Christ. Here is the real spiritual nexus between the soul to be won and the soul of the winner. Sometimes it is a very difficult thing to discover this connection. It is such a delicate step to take in invading a sinful heart of man or woman. People of the world oftentimes are sensitive on matters of belief and living. And while they may not become offended, they, nevertheless, do not regard it the business of soul-winners to interfere with their personal soul affairs. Yet, for the most part, it is true, that people will listen to the sensible pleas of genuine Christian men and women.

Now, it is clear that the Sunday-school teacher's business is to find some clue to the soul of the unsaved and then get that soul to change its base of living. This surely requires the "wisdom of a serpent and the harmlessness of a dove"—even more than that. The tactics of an angel are hardly sufficient for it. But it is true that no service of a Sunday-school teacher is so vital, so difficult, and so delicate, as the personal touch of his life to another. And while it is so difficult and delicate, it may take on differing forms, still it must be true, sincere, brave, and very loving. The soul to be won, can be won in no other way than by the sincerest effort—by an effort unbrazen and unafraid, by an effort that fairly pulsates with the spirit and sweetness of love.

When the Sunday-school teacher has found the way into the heart and mind of the scholar, he must never upbraid, reproach, or lecture his soul. This happens frequently with teachers who strive to correct the errors of others. Many teachers and preachers, too, have not yet learned the art of approaching the unsaved with proper speech or gentle winning acts. And yet this is so important, as has been said, that it seems the only way of bringing the souls of unredeemed ones to an attitude of mind where they will accept the truth. But the fact is that most persons are willing to decide for the better if they are approached properly, though they may feel themselves under tremendous pressure of conscience, or may wage a stiff fight against fast-conquering convictions. If the teacher, however, has spiritual skill, combined with courage, he will gain

ground step by step, until he has won the soul to Christ.

The truth of this assertion was never proven so well in experience than a few years ago when the following incident happened: One evening after services of an evangelistic type, in a Connecticut city, a poor woman came to me and told a harrowing story of her husband's debaucheries and brutality. She asked me to come to her miserable home and stay for a week that I might witness his life and get him to Jesus Christ. I finally consented, though it was in midwinter when the snows were deep and the cold almost unbearable. I had to sleep upstairs over the kitchen, in a bed the artistic qualities of which are beyond description; and I had the use of comforts—ice-water for bathing, a bare floor, a zero temperature, and the perfumes of the cooking below as they oozed up through the cracks of the floor. I managed to keep clean and my beard was not allowed to get two days old at any time in spite of the difficulties of shaving myself. I ate enough pork and beans and potatoes during that time to last me twenty years as a memory of monotonous diet. I shall never forget the face of that rough blacksmith, as one evening, near the end of my heroic efforts, to save him, he tried to choke down the sobs and tears, when he said: "Your acts of kindness and love toward me are just breaking my heart. If a man like you can do for me what you have done, because you love my soul, then what will not Jesus do for me? I must accept Him here and now." And the poor drunk-

ard, so blackened in sin, fell into the snowy arms of his Saviour, a redeemed soul.

(f) From all of this, it may be seen that the "loving touch" must *be* loving. This sounds like an absurdity, in view of what has been said so persistently. But the "touch" must be loving—and by that is meant in a deeper sense, an exceptional love—or a contact of the Sunday-school teacher on the level where the soul *is* in its sins and hopelessness. With intense sympathy and wonderful compassion, the heart of the teacher must go to the heart of the unredeemed until resistance to such sweetly persuasive love is impossible. Jerry McAuley had such love when he kissed the filthy, diseased, sin-besotten face of the terrible criminal who had maltreated him shamefully and almost murdered him. With his arms around him, holding him as a mother holds her child, he pleadingly said, "I want Jesus to have your soul." And Jesus took his soul! Jesus took Mary Magdalene's soul into His heart when she washed His feet with her tears! And Jesus took the soul of St. Augustine into His soul when his mother Monica pleaded so hard and so long, in the bitterness of grief and sobs, for her poor, broken boy!

The effect of such a touch will be most realizable when the Sunday-school teacher follows the simple lines of honesty of purpose, on the basis of truth-living, with unquestioned courage. A class soon knows when a teacher is really sincere in desire to win them to Jesus. They discover soon enough also if their teacher is given to honour of word and act.

Misrepresentations or misdoings, on his part, cannot long remain hidden from them. As an instance, a teacher may tell them that indisposition or illness kept him away from the last session of the school. But one of the boys or girls happened to see that teacher in an auto or at some pleasure resort, or doing something of a questionable social character. As a result that teacher lost out on the class. I knew a teacher of this kind who missed the big chance of his life at winning his class to Christ because he lied or broke his promises so often. Truth-living by a Sunday-school teacher is synonymous with spiritual success!

IX

THE TEACHER'S CLASS FIRST AND LAST

THE Sunday-school teacher who has had the right vision of things and the practical experience of heart, or to put it more concretely, the "loving touch," will never allow a time or occasion to come when the class of boys or girls, men or women, do not have first and last consideration. This will always be the central impulse of every effort, the motive power of every act, and the loving hope of every desire toward redemption. It really could not be otherwise with a devoted, consecrated, spirit-baptized Sunday-school teacher, in the work of saving souls!

The class, whatever material may compose it, or whosoever may belong to it, must, therefore, come first and last in a teacher's thinking and serving. While other things, like home, profession, church, and daily recreation, may of necessity occupy a large portion of his thoughts, the class of souls, however, large or small, should take up the major strength of all mental efforts. For, as has been already indicated, the class itself—as an organized body or as a composite agency for good in the Sunday school, or as an asset of personal and social life in the community—must have prior claims upon a teacher's thoughts and love. And when a class is thus looked upon from the

point of its individuals and characters, as they face life here and shall face destiny hereafter, it seems then as if too much cannot be made of it by its teacher and leader!

(a) One of the first things for the teacher to consider, aside from his thoughts, prayers, and affection for the class, should be its organization into some practical form. In a live Sunday school with a flexible program of services, there should be no exceptions to this suggestion. Even adult classes may come under this plan as well as the departments of beginners. However simple or informal the organization, every class of a real working Sunday school, ought to be in line with such a practice, for, it has been found, that this form of class-life means so much to the Sunday school by way of loyalty and service to the church, and so much as an influence in the community. In fact it is known that such classes are a great power for good over those which are tied together merely by the loose strings of sentiment or some other material attractions.

Boys and girls, even men and women of quite mature years, are not averse to organized purposes and efforts. The truth is that they like to be bound together with some kind of ties or fellowship apart from simple fellowship or association. They do not seem to chafe under such connections. They find themselves more amicably settled in their studies and services, and even more willing to cooperate in the larger enterprises of Sunday-school work.

An organized class, therefore, has an appeal toward

social comradeship and spiritual guidance where voluntary unions of classes have not. And this one factor surely should be a strong asset in our Sunday schools today. If such a feature like this can be made productive of good and growth in the schools, as it seems, then it is only reasonable to wish for organized efforts in them. Hence, it is natural to ask how it may be done with the best possible results.

(a) The matter is simple enough, upon the whole, when the personal habits and desires of the members of the Sunday school are studied with the end of their redemption in view. As soon as the classes have been formed, they can choose their distinctive names, form their rules of governing themselves, and inject enough of social features into the programs of their labours to brace them up at all times. Perhaps, a specific motto may add to the spirit and strength of the class. Then too, oftentimes, such a thing as a class pin or button may be like a magnetic influence to attract and hold the members together. Or it may be that some mystic recognition, phrase, or word, has value in binding the members into a fellowship of seekers and co-laborers, just as in the great secret societies of today.

(b) But, in every instance, the seriousness, sacredness, and serviceableness of such an organized body, must always be kept in mind by the teacher and as often brought to the minds and hearts of the scholars. They must be led to understand that with the conditions of organization, there is also a bond of honour or a tie of close friendliness or brotherly or sisterly relations that will not allow anything of a law-

less or unruly character in the class. This must be an essential known and practised by both teachers and scholars, if the strength and solidarity of the class is to be maintained and its work made efficient and lasting. Strict discipline, therefore, or consistent conduct in a Sunday-school class speaks much for its influence and power in the Church.

(c) With these regulations or observances of right conduct, an organized Sunday-school class has a distinct class-spirit—another thing so vital to its existence and work. From a mere body of volunteers, without any defined aim or united effort, such a class becomes a recognized force in the school. This gives it a sense of importance and brings to it a pride otherwise unfelt or unknown. From this class-consciousness as it is often called, there will be born an urge for activities, alertness, intensity and self-perpetuating power within itself *to be and to do!*

(d) Then, too, within this organization there will always be a deep and abiding union between the teacher and the scholars. And this is one of the most wholesome, most useful, and promising factors in all Sunday-school work. This form of organization has proven the life, hope, and success of the class as well as the splendid example of that unity of Christians which should characterize our modern religion.

(e) Besides all this, a Sunday-school class, thus organized, can do work for the kingdom of God as no other class may dare to hope. Some one has said to this point that "organized classes in Sunday schools spell '*do*,' while those voluntarily there very often spell

'*doom.*'" But the former is precisely what an organized class seeks at all times and avoids at all times the tendencies and trends of failure. Such classes, it is seen, are doers of the word, and not hearers only. They have faith that lays hold of possibilities and then they work them out to a finish. The common task of the class is the task of every member and every member feels inclined to do the task with the prospect of victory in view. Here is a wonderful fact for Sunday-school teachers to remember—a class work for each member—until it is done. None can stand idly by while others do the work. Each one is called to do the share of it that comes to him. And this is what gives a Sunday school liveliness and power in a church. A Sunday-school teacher cannot afford, therefore, to have one scholar ever say, "I have nothing to do." No great wonder that many churches are dead—or at least, getting ready to die, in this very busy age of materialistic fancy and froth. People are letting it alone because there is no program for them—no possible chance to develop what they believe or have. The social or moral qualities which they may have are overlooked by the church, and they seek the corners in the world where they can enjoy themselves.

The same thing is true of the organized Sunday-school class. Every one must be at work. An illustration to this is here. In a very large class of young men, it was a difficult problem for the teacher to have each member at the task. For a number of Sundays two fellows came to the sessions but they went away every time with the sense of their uselessness because

there did not seem to be anything for them to do except listen to the teacher, smile, and be satisfied. This teacher was a wise man when he saw their discomfiture of spirit and disappointments of desire. So on the next Sunday he said to one of them when he entered the classroom, in a very business-like way: "I want you to open and shut the door as men come in." Turning to the other fellow, he said: "I want you to take each man's hat and place it on a hook or rack over there." The young men smiled and said: "We shall be glad to serve in that way." And they did. It was to them the biggest task of the whole class.

(f) In such a class the Sunday-school teacher must be the radiating, indeed, the strong center of thought, of suggestion, and of sacrifice. With the other officers of the class as president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and the various committees, the teacher must be the life, or as the street phrase has it, "the pep" of the class. Not that he does all the work of the class. But he must be the generating power—a kind of central dynamo from which the inspiration, the push, the pluck of the class proceeds toward successful spiritual work. In other words, such a class has its fill of "ginger" for real service and sacrifice when its teacher can stand in its midst and say to each member: "I am living for each one of you and I shall lead each one of you to victory. Follow me, men, to the task."

(g) The real Sunday-school teacher must be the initiative of most of the features of the class—assuming to lead the way—in study, in devotion, in social

activity, and in every service for souls. He can if he be the right sort of teacher, introduce, for example, a system of study or course of reading—a study of the Bible or other books that explain many things about human life, especially that life which has to do in a world of experiences and hope. In this way the true teacher can train his class to become a fit organization of serious people who are mingling in the social and secular affairs of men, giving a balance to these things toward happiness, hope, and helpfulness. And after all, is not this the great secret which the world has to learn today—the secret of being hopeful, helpful, and happy? It surely is so. For every person who really thinks upon life's problems and seeks their solution, cannot but feel that the Christian Church with its organized forms of service, is ready to aid in those things.

(h) With such a plan and philosophy of living in mind, a real, live, broad, and enthusiastic Sunday-school teacher can become a splendid example of democratic ideas and ways. This is just what the great unchurched world needs now—a thoroughgoing transformation in unselfish, unrestricted, and unbiased practices of brotherly love. At this place the teacher has one of the finest opportunities to teach—teaching the wonderful principles of love, and enforcing them in deeds of deep and unsullied friendship, urging, too, his scholars to live beyond the petty, trivial, narrow things of every-day life, within the ever-broadening circles of the bright, cheery, considerate, helpful, even-sharing purposes, prospects, and possessions of mind,

heart, and hand. This necessarily includes, as we can readily see, the manner of living, the manner of service—and the manner of sharing the joys and gifts of life with each other.

Here is the basis of the real Kingdom of God among men. And this is just what Jesus had in mind when He cried out: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was a kingdom of democratic ideas and hopes. So democratic and so world-embracing that all men who wished to enter it had the chance. For within its bounds the restrictions of human society could not obtain. All financial, social, or intellectual limitations are unknown there. There fellowship is determined by other things than calling or caste. The language men speak there is the speech of the redeemed. The habits of that society are the customs of regenerated lives. The treasures of the men and women and children in that circle are characters of pure gold. There everything belongs to every one and every one belongs to everything. It is a society of humans, made sympathetic, compassionate, loving, true, clean, and sweet, by the endless power of the Spirit of God.

(i) An organized Sunday-school class with such a program before it—and willing to apply it as far as possible—can accomplish most marvelous and magnificent results with men. The same program can be filled in with small children, if the teacher is tactful and tries to understand the scholars. This matter has been frequently mentioned by those who have questioned the use of a definite program of love and sacrifice for little ones in the Sunday schools. It is just as possible with

them as with adults, to teach them politeness, gentleness, honour, and kindness. In fact they learn more rapidly how to love and to be loved than older people whose hearts have become hardened by the cruel ways of the world. The truth is that they form themselves into democracies of love and kindly services as readily as those of maturer years. And so whether a Sunday-school class organized among younger or older people is under consideration, it is a fact that the spirit of wholesome service and the sense of unselfish loyalty, can be maintained there with wonderful results. Any organized class that fails to find itself in sympathy with such an idea is surely a mistake and needs a complete transformation.

Now, perhaps, one more thought should be added to this chapter. What kind of a program should an organized class have at its regular sessions? Possibly it might be like this: First, there should be prayer and the prayer-spirit. Then the reading of some appropriate Scripture or the regular lesson for the day. The repetition of the class motto or watchword should follow. The study of the lesson may come next. A few practical things like the distribution of work for the week. All of this may be concluded with prayer for the sick, for the needy, and for the unredeemed. Then, the social time of good cheer and farewells.

But remember the clarion appeal from first to last, should be from teachers and scholars alike,—Our classes first and last, for the unsaved! This must be the strong claim of their minds and hearts, the passion of their souls, toward those to be redeemed unto Jesus Christ.

X

THE TEACHER'S METHODS OF TEACHING

WITH every qualification of a true Sunday-school teacher, there is that of his ability to teach according to the best methods of teaching. The latest inventions of heart and mind, if such distinction is permitted here, in this respect, are now effective in many of our Sunday schools. So our leaders tell us at the Sunday-school conferences and in the periodicals of the church boards. If it be true, then the question may follow why these methods of teaching should not be used by the teachers who hope to bring their scholars to the highest efficiency in love and service as a class. The fact is there can not be any real good reason, from the very demands of the cause, why they should not be willing to adopt and practise every tested and true method of teaching in their Sunday-school work. Still, one thing must be kept in mind when there is talk as to methods of teaching—and that is—only the best methods of teaching ought to be considered, in order that the best results may be obtained. Of the many methods known today, four may be outlined here.

The Recitation Plan or Method. As to this method practical teachers in our public schools differ and presumably the same thing is true with Sunday-school

teachers. And yet this method is one now mostly used in our Sunday schools. It is very simple and possibly as helpful and suggestive in developing the minds and hearts of the pupils as any other method that touches only superficially upon the salient facts of a Sunday-school lesson. But the scholars are expected, under this method, to prepare the lesson and the teacher is supposed to draw out of them the facts and truths of the lesson, by questions, during the school session. And while self-expression and confidence may be found as a result of the teacher's questionings, and much benefit may come to those who conscientiously accept the method, it is, nevertheless, true, that the method as tried in many schools has clearly proved itself ineffective. The real reason for this can possibly be traced directly to the teachers rather than to the scholars.

For it is well known that few Sunday-school teachers take sufficient time to form the "quizzes" for their classes. Most of them usually wait for the Sunday-school sessions and then ask such questions as they think vital or to the point. Under such teaching the whole method becomes haphazard, superficial, profitless, dull, mechanical, and lifeless. For no teacher can ask questions on a Sunday-school lesson, however simple, if the lesson has not been studied beforehand. For example: how could a teacher ask about the faith of Abraham, his journey out of Ur of Chaldea and the great sacrifice he was called upon to make on Mount Moriah, and so on, if he had not read about this wonderful man of Old Testament times?

How could he ask pertinent questions concerning Upper or Lower Chaldea and its lines of Sumerian kings and their religious relations to this man of God? How could he ask any direct question about the country through which he and his family had to travel toward the plains of Mamre? And how could he ask about the details of the fiery trial through which he passed concerning his son?

Sometimes, however, there may be another way of getting the facts of the lesson. It may take the form of dictated questions and written or oral answers. The teacher prepares the questions beforehand—say two weeks in advance—and the pupils come prepared afterwards with the answers. Of course this method requires work of the teacher, but no good teacher can expect to bring his class to a high point of Biblical knowledge, without some effort. It makes work for the class too, but that is as it should be if the class has any desire to learn the truths of the Bible at all. This method of teaching has been found preferable to any other in secular studies of colleges and universities. And why should it not have similar endorsement in Sunday-school work?

The Conversational Method. There is still a second way of studying the Sunday-school lessons by what is known as the "talk-by-talk" method, or the conference of ideas between the Sunday-school teacher and the class. In other words, the method goes like this: The teacher only stands before the class as the leader in discussion, or conversations about the lesson. An interchange of opinions between the scholars and him

brings the body together and illumines the subject and fosters independence of thought, and breaks up personal reserve. It is known by many as the "Socratic" way of teaching the truth. Jesus also followed this method very often in His teaching, asking the questions and supplying the answers at the same time, too, when no Peters were there to furnish them. (See Luke 10:25-27.) Here you have a splendid example of this method. Jesus shows how effectively He can bring the mind of a doubter or caviler to His way of thinking by compelling him to answer his own question.

Suppose the experience related here is told in everyday speech? The questioner is a caviling lawyer who came to Jesus to test His knowledge of the Law. He asks Him what he must do to get eternal life. Jesus replies: "Tell me, sir, what your own law says about it. You ought to know, for you are a lawyer." The lawyer was shrewd enough not to be evasive. So he says: "Why our law is plain. It says that we must love Jehovah and our neighbours as we love ourselves, for you know that every Jew loves himself above everybody else." Jesus now comes at him with a rapier thrust of truth—"I know it," He answers. "You seem to understand perfectly well your law. If you do, then why don't you obey it? If you do so, you shall live." The lawyer, not the least bit embarrassed at this sally, replies: "My dear sir, I do not know any neighbours except the Gentiles and the Samaritans, and we Jews hate them."

Now, when Jesus heard his candid confession, He

told him that marvelous story of human love of a hated Samaritan for a poor unfortunate victim of thieves, on the Jericho road. It is not difficult to guess what his opinions were concerning the priest and Levite—who passed him by on the other side. The contrast between them and the compassionate Samaritan is so striking that the lawyer at once saw the point of the truth Jesus tried to put to his iron soul. He frankly admitted that the hated friend of the certain man was the noblest type of a true keeper of the spirit and letter of the law of love. He answered Jesus with the words: "He that showed mercy on him." This reply gave Jesus the chance for a terrific home-thrust as he said, "Go, and do thou likewise."

But it can be seen that this method requires some gifts of thought, fine directions of sense, a keen analysis of sentiment, and the strongest kind of application of the truth to the hearts of the scholars. There are few teachers who know how to do it as Jesus did it. Many of us who attempt to teach are like the professor of economics in one of our western colleges. When he appeared before his classes he followed the easier way of teaching—the way of asking all the questions and of answering them himself. He invariably put the matter of the text or facts of the study in such a manner that the student had no difficulty in saying "yes" or "no" as the question might require. One of the students told me that a recitation in logic or economics before him was only a joke. What incentive for any student in attending upon such teaching?

The Lecture Method. There is another form of

teaching called the lecture method. This style of instruction is largely employed in many of our Sunday schools, especially so where large classes are organized, such as men's or women's Bible classes. In this instance the teacher or some one chosen for the task, delivers an address and the members scarcely ever take any part in the session. This is an attractive method for many persons for the reason that they have so little time to study the Bible, and, therefore, they welcome something of this kind.

This method, it may be said, has some special advantages over many others. Perhaps, these may be given under three heads. 1. A large number of people who attend the Sunday-school sessions, may, by this plan, be under one efficient teacher. They are thus enabled to learn more than when under a number of inferior teachers. 2. This method also gives the opportunity to the class of calling upon specialists for the discussion of technical or particular topics. 3. Then, too, it brings together many persons who like the socializing influences of the Sunday-school spirit and work. And this could not possibly follow if the same people were scattered over many classes.

But this method, however, does precisely what others of similar character do—it does not require study on the part of the class. And this, it must be confessed, is the beginning of the habits of spiritual indolence which curses many a Sunday-school class. But while it may be allowable, on the social side, it certainly does not confer much benefit on the side of the spiritual—the very thing so much needed today

in our Bible schools. Besides such a method may often interfere with the prime work of the pulpit because the people feel that they have sufficient instruction through the lectures of the teacher. And finally, this method, it has been found, cannot be used very effectually in classes where the pupils are young and unable to comprehend the principles of the Gospel like adults. In the kindergarten, beginners', and primary departments, the method has been a total failure.

The Topical Method. This, perhaps, is one of the best methods of teaching, though it should really be called the question-and-answer method. It has three very excellent advantages of studying the Bible or any other books, over those already suggested. 1. It enables the skillful Sunday-school teacher to get the gist of the lesson as he can in no other way. 2. It brings the scholars to the essential principles of the lesson—the thing to which every lesson invites both the teacher and the members of the class. 3. It teaches them to memorize the central ideas of each lesson—another thing most useful and profitable. Other methods, as has been said, do not exact this service of the mind. And so if this method of Bible study may be called the question-and-answer method, which term is preferable, it seems that the ideal way of reaching the truths of redemption, has been discovered at last. It is ideal for several choice reasons.

(a) It is ideal because it gives the teacher the opportunity of knowing the subject of each lesson in a most perfect way. In fact it gives him the chance to know what every lesson is intended to convey, before

he presents himself to his class. That is to say, the teacher must know it before he can frame correct questions and answers to his class. And this should be one of the greatest advantages to his mental life, for it gives him such a supreme privilege of preparation as he cannot get in any other way of study. In this respect there are two features which stand out plainly before his attempts. One of them is that he can seek one question at a time and its answer. Then he has the whole week before him for the setting of the questions and their answers, and by the time the hour comes for him to appear before his class he will undoubtedly have the lesson points so thoroughly mastered that the task of teaching it will be comparatively easy. Of course this process of teaching will require some mental skill, but it is worth while to show one's ability by becoming master of a subject to which other minds are to be directed for their spiritual enlightenment. If, however, on the other hand, a teacher does not care to know the lesson, and may care less how he appears before the wondering souls of his class, then it is a different matter altogether, in the ethics of Sunday-school teaching. But to the teacher who wishes to be recognized as one who knows how to teach, and how to influence hearts toward the truth of salvation, without any embarrassment or even shame, his preparation of the lesson will mean everything upon every occasion.

(b) Then it gives a teacher such independence of mind and manner as will convince the scholars more readily than in any other way, that he knows the

truth which will set them free. This is another step toward the ideal in teaching. For just see when a teacher comes into the presence of his class with concise, clean-cut, and positive information and truth about persons, places or things, to be studied and known, the class will, at once, notice it and pay heed to their teacher. But if he should come in a different way from this, unprepared, embarrassed, apologetic, most classes will be indifferent, listless, sleepy, and will go away from the session, unsatisfied and complaining. It may not be believed that it is so, but scholars soon feel the ignorance and stupidity of Sunday-school teachers when they display these traits of mind through careless fumbling of the facts of the lesson, and more careless slipshod ways of giving them to the eager ears of the pupils. This fact was brought out very forcibly some years ago in a recitation of a class in German. The teacher could hardly pronounce the words of the lesson, and her rendition of the love story was so absurd that the puzzled students who could not even read the German nor parse a word, were bound to believe that the heroine of the tale was a ridiculous imaginary doll baby in the middle of the stream and the hero hidden in the weeds on its banks, a poor fool-lover who could not discern the difference between a foam-crowned rock in mid-stream and a real sweetheart, waiting there for him!

(c) This method of teaching is also ideal because it brings the scholars face to face with the real in life. They will find in this question-and-answer system of Sunday school Bible study the very things that reveal

human nature in its sins, and human nature in its helplessness, and human nature in its hopeful outlook for eternal life. What other plan of systematic Bible study is there that can match it so well at so many essential points? Take just here that concrete illustration of John's Gospel where Jesus and a great exponent of Judaism meet. Here is the picture of two giant minds coming into contact with each other on the basis of a most wonderful problem of soul—its relation to redemptive truth and its disposition of that truth as it affects destiny. It is Jesus the teacher come from God and Nicodemus the teacher from the chosen people of God. But the difference between them was the difference of a conscious knowledge of the soul and its entrance into everlasting life, and the strange workings of a mind, schooled in ecclesiastical bigotry and self-righteousness, toward a truth personal and pulsating with light and hope for a soul like this master of Israel.

Now, let the teacher put the questions involving this momentous problem of the soul's destiny. And naturally he will ask, first of all, who this man Nicodemus was. What was his home-religious training? What position did he occupy in his synagogue? What relation did he bear to the Jewish ecclesiastical court —the Sanhedrin? As a man of untarnished reputation among his people, did he furnish an ideal example of a true Christian? If he was a true Christian according to the teachings of Judaism, why did he come to Jesus? Was it to entrap Jesus in his belief and thoughts like the lawyer had hoped to do, or did he

seek him for soul relief? Why did Jesus put the matter of his soul's need so pointedly and not in plain words like John the Baptist when he told the people to repent? Why did Nicodemus admit his ignorance of the new birth? And why did he try to explain it on the ground of naturalism as men, today, are trying to explain Jesus' birth and resurrection from the grave? Why did Jesus not tell him how men are regenerated by the Spirit of the living God?

It is seen from this series of questions that every essential of salvation is covered, including the marvelous fact of regeneration and its nature and effect upon the soul. Of a truth, Jesus did not explain it, nor can anyone else do so. It is enough to know that the Holy Spirit *does* regenerate men and they become conscious of it, as did Nicodemus or the blind boy, or the impotent man of thirty-eight years of waiting and sufferings, or the dying thief or Paul on the Damascene way, or as thousands of others since then who have come to Jesus for eternal life. And it is surely enough to say that his wonderful transforming power of God does not need any explanation, any more than a botanist needs to explain why roses are red and fragrant. Still here is the fact—the mighty evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit when the truth of Jesus Christ is taken by the unsaved soul and it is convinced of its sins and finally converted unto God.

Now, when the question is put to an unborn soul that it must be saved, it will arouse such a life more quickly and surely than the mere telling of the same story. This has been demonstrated thousands of times

in revivals and Christian work, and especially so in Sunday-school teaching. Just ask some man or woman, boy or girl—ask it kindly and tenderly—the question, Are you saved or do you want Jesus as your personal Saviour? and like an arrow dipped in love's own blood, and shot from love's own bow, the question will penetrate into the very inner soul of the person, and invariably provoke conscience to reply in some way which will lead into life. It has always been so.

When, therefore, the Sunday-school teacher tries to connect each lesson with human life and its problems here, and its destiny hereafter—the only real things in this world—he will surely get results in individual conversions.

XI

THE TEACHER AND A PICTORIAL METHOD

IT has already been said that of all the methods of teaching none was as ideal as the question-and-answer method. But there is another one which appeals to many Sunday-school teachers fully as much as the former. It is the method of picturization, that is, the setting before scholars the lesson in pictures—illustrations, and in such concrete ways as find practical demonstration from every-day life and experience. This was partly Christ's way of presenting some of His most beautiful and telling truths. In Matthew 13:3, we read: "And he spoke many things unto them in parables." And when His disciples came and asked Him why He spoke in such a way, He replied: "Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they seeing, see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand"—Matt. 13:13. The words of Jesus show very clearly two distinct things—that Jesus believed in the Pictorial Method and that in order to explain many otherwise difficult problems, He found this way better than the direct methods of statements or words or even that of expounding principles of religion.

Let us follow Jesus in this respect, reserving, however, the next chapter for a more direct presentation of His mode of teaching the fundamentals of Himself and His kingdom.

First of all, let us see what the pictorial method in-

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cludes in its general and detailed form. If we define it we shall simply mean a method of teaching which lights up any subject under consideration, leading from the concrete to the abstract. This is done through the help of material illustrations such as objects seen by the eyes, models of objects, pictures, maps, curios, blackboard outlines, and so on. These are the medii through which wonderful facts and truths are made clear and known to the uncultured minds of the young and old, in our Sunday schools. And these helps are most useful in every department of Sunday-school work, though it has been said quite frequently that the pictorial method can only be used in the kindergarten and beginners' departments. But this is scarcely the whole truth, for it is well understood that it can be used very successfully in every department of a Sunday school if under proper form and management. In fact, during recent years there have been frequent demonstrations of the method by the moving picture machines. In spite of the adverse criticisms of such appliances, much good has been done through them, for they have proven themselves splendid vehicles of illumination of ideas and truths to the minds of scholars.

The pictorial method, therefore, it may be taken as a fact, does bring to the minds of pupils in most enlightening ways certain difficult truths that could not be made so clear by any other methods. The Sunday-school teacher who uses that method of teaching will, without a doubt, win the utmost attention of the class and attract others also to the class. But that teacher

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who ventures to use it must be able to do a number of things and do them well. He must be quite inventive and skillful, for, in order to make the method of illustration really effective and helpful to his scholars, he must be an apt story teller too—he must be ready to furnish some object that illuminates the subject under thought—he must include in the art of telling the story the fact of what it IS intended to make clear. Or if an object is used he must know how to combine the appearance of the thing itself with the idea to be fixed upon the class.

Take, for example, the story of the Prodigal Son—Luke 15. Here Jesus told a story so well of a lost boy wandering in the wicked world, that the Jew could see at once who that boy represented. He could also guess with certainty that the father in the story represented the God of the Jewish people. Furthermore, he could picture the joyous times of restoration when the Messiah should come to claim His own chosen people. Or take an example of teaching with an object known to most children of the Sunday school. Here is the magnet and nails. The lesson of the attractive power of the Cross and the law underlying it. Or take the red-skinned, beautiful apple. Cut it open and find it worm-eaten in its very heart. Sinners looking so respectable as men and women, but whose hearts are filled with sin.

Now, there are three ways in which this method may be employed with great success. The first one is what is known as the actor's way of presenting truth. And by this there is meant the way that a Sunday-school

teacher lives his own life before his class. If the lesson is about the lilies that toil not nor spin, the teacher surely can discover what they teach about consecration of talents and time to the service of souls. He can know that a white life is acceptable to God and a gift to men. He can also know that redeemed character is beautiful before heaven and it has the approbation of mankind. If the teacher acts his part well, his class will see him spin the flax of his social and moral traits into the spiritual threads that go into the woof of his character.

Then the teacher can find still another way of using this method. He can apply the chalks on a blackboard, drawing figures or objects all of which may illustrate the points of the lesson before the class. An instance for study might happen to be the golden candlesticks, of the Temple, to which John refers in the Book of Revelation. Let the teacher draw these candlesticks in yellow representing gold, the burning flames in white, and then give the whole the appearance of being lighted. The lesson stands out very clearly to the eyes of the pupils. There is the story of the seven wonderful things of the seven churches of Asia Minor, mentioned in Revelation. But there are seven other wonderful facts besides them. Faith, the first great thing in man. Progress, another great thing in his life. Conflict, another great thing that gave man pre-eminence over all other things. Civilization, another great thing that showed man's wish to govern himself. Hope, another great thing that ushered in during various periods of the world, changes

for man's betterment. Invention, another great thing that showed man's intellectual and physical genius. Sacrifice, another great thing that indicated man's purpose to bequeath his life and love to posterity.

The third way of using this method is to study the lessons in connection with natural things, and things in particular with which man has to do. The wide-awake teacher of a Sunday school will interest the class with the earth, sea, sky, and the inventions of man. If the lesson is about Creation, he will try to explain all about the earth, and man who is here to subdue it. If it happens to be a lesson on the Deluge of the days of Noah, the teacher will describe the clouds and how the rains come from them and how oftentimes the floods follow their outpourings. He will explain what devastations and destructions come with great floods and how people desperately seek to overcome these things but frequently fail because nature is mightier than man. Johnstown, Pa., had a great flood, and so did Dayton, Ohio, both of which illustrate what the eternal flood of God's judgment will be when it comes to sweep into eternity the whole human race.

What is there to hinder a teacher from inviting the class to a stroll, even some Sunday afternoon, out into the fields or woods? The lesson may be about the wheat and tares or about the storm at sea. He can instruct his scholars in the wonderful art of nature—how a grain of wheat grows and how the winds blow and the seas rage under them. The members of a Sunday-school class will never forget such actual demonstrations of the truth. Every lesson impressed

upon a class in this way will remain as a permanent possession of each pupil. In addition, this outdoor experience is worth a great deal to classes in the way of improved health through exercise and the creation of a sentiment or love for one's own country. Trees, streams, birds, fields,—hundreds of things may be seen and studied—all of which round out human life and make the music of the soul sweet for eternal ages.

But the pictorial method of Bible study has another splendid feature that should not be passed by. It has, upon the whole, a wonderful and stimulating effect on the minds and hearts of scholars. And this can be set forth in various forms of mental experiences. First, a pupil may be attracted by a story or illuminating object more positively and quickly than by an abstract illustration or demonstration, however interesting it happens to be. The very sound of a good story well told, will immediately awaken the sluggish mind or the indifferent listener if anything will. A child, as well as an older person, will hearken to a thrilling tale, or give heed to some pictorial display, where mere recitals of scientific facts or the sheer statements of principles, would not create a ripple of excitement or a strain of amusement. Take up a piece of coal—one of nature's great and most marvelous products. Tell how it is formed—how it burns—and what it predicts in the way of other things for man's use in almost every sphere of life. In five minutes, more truth—scientific and economic—can be given by such a concrete fact, than a teacher can give in four hours by mere talk on some ethical or moral subject.

Then, in the second place, there is a wonderful help to memory and understanding through pictures, and stories, and nature's picturesque displays. Oftentimes, as an instance, the mind can recall and balance up living truths apparently forgotten or neglected in the laboratory of life, when some story is told, or some object is seen by the eyes. Sometimes this very method is employed in the courts when criminal cases are difficult to handle. Some object connected with the episode or crime is presented to the jury to prove the intent and act of the criminals before the bar of justice. In a similar way the Sunday-school teacher can take a cup of water and illustrate how thirst can be slaked—how it may be used for cleansing purposes—how it has become an indispensable necessity in our industrial life. There may be in the class a boy or girl who once upon a time was pure and clean, but is now the opposite. By tactful explanations of this symbol of purity the teacher can send home to that heart the truth that the water of life not only slakes the thirst of the soul but washes it white as the snow. The woman of Samaria may be cited as an example of its life-giving power.

But this idea can be enlarged, once more, when memory is stirred by the bitter and sad things of a past life of sin or wrong-doing. The story told or the illustration at hand or the object presented, may be a mirror of that life, reflecting its wrongs and its sufferings and its repenting hours or days. Take still another vivid instance that might happen any time in human experience. A Sunday-school teacher, in ex-

plaining a lesson, said to her class: "Now, you,"—calling one of her girls by name—"suppose you should talk very disrespectfully to your brother and slap him in the face, what would we think of such a girl and her temper? We could not love her very much, could we?" But the story took another turn much to the surprise of this Christian teacher. The girl failed to catch the purpose of her teacher, and yet that purpose came to a climax in her life when she related to her father what had been said to her. He was glad for his child's sake because he had tried to break her temper more than once, and now, through a Sunday-school teacher's apt illustration, the very thing was accomplished which he had so long desired. He told that teacher about his little girl and her bad mental habit, and thanked her for the desired result. But, it is seen, that the statement had a twofold effect upon the girl—it mirrored her ugly disposition and made her conscious that a consecrated Christian mind could discern her thoughts. And this was more than her heart could bear!

Jesus used the same method upon various occasions when He wanted to bring home to the unbelieving, gross-minded and hypocritical Pharisees, the truth which they so often sought to pervert. How often were they condemned in their own conceits! And yet, in spite of that fact, they grew angry, restless, bitter, resentful, and even vindictive and at last, out of the deepest hatred, they consented to their Saviour's death. This has happened at times in the history of the Gospel of Christ among civilized peoples—that

teachers of the truth were slain for Jesus' sake. The story of the martyr Patteson, as told by Dr. Hillis, is a striking example of the sacrifice one can make for Christ. That very gallant boy died under the clubs of those South Sea Islanders that their lost souls might be found for his Saviour. After his death they laid his body in "an open boat to float away over the bright blue waves, with his hands crossed as if in prayer and a palm branch on his breast. And there, in the white light, he lies now, immortal forever."

In the kindergarten sections of our Sunday schools, the children have the best kinds of pictorial training. They have many things for their study and woe to the Sunday-school superintendent who cannot see the need of every equipment necessary for the instruction of the little people of his school. And here a splendid suggestion may be made with profit, it is to be hoped, to us all. The little folks of every Sunday school should have the most advantageous surroundings and helps obtainable. Separate rooms if possible for their work. Suitable chairs and attractive outfits, such as pictures, music, pianos, programs, lessons, supplemental work, proper atmosphere,—and above all, the very best teachers to be had. For this service in our Sunday schools, female dolls will never do—and female automatons are entirely out of place here. Consecrated women who love children, who know them and can lead them aright, are the needed ones in that department. Such teachers, understanding children, sympathizing with and loving them, can lead them to Jesus even as a mother's heart may do it.

XII

THE TEACHER AND CHRIST'S METHOD

AT last we are coming to the ideal method of teaching in Sunday school, since we shall accept the way of understanding and imparting the everlasting Truth of God, as Jesus followed it. Everything He did by teaching, or by serving, or by loving, was so uniquely practical and above all it was ideal. The same thing comes to pass, in degree, with the Sunday-school teacher who has taken for his pattern the Master Teacher of all time.

If the study of the lesson has been carefully made, therefore, according to the plan of Jesus, the teacher will find his method of telling Gospel truth most ideal. If, on the other hand, he has found himself unable to realize the ideal in teaching, then there must be some great difficulty of mind or heart to be overcome. He will be able, if he is willing, to discover this perplexing affair, by a deep search into his heart and by looking intently at the very simple method of teaching which Jesus used upon every occasion. He was simplicity itself when He expressed the truth about His Kingdom or when He declared His love for lost souls. To the great point of redemption, He addressed His supremest and most vital thoughts, and to the hearts of the unconverted He brought the truth of life so forcibly and plainly that the conscience and souls of saint and sinner could arrange themselves on the plane

of repentance and forgiveness—the very things He strove to impress upon the world then.

(a) But Jesus had a direct method of stating the truth. By this we mean that He knew the truth and that He could put it so that no one should fail to catch its inner purposes. There have been those who declared that He spoke in mysterious phrases,—words and sentiments hard to understand by the ignorant and unsaved. And for this very reason the Pharisees were unable to accept His teaching, it has been said. While they were not ignorant in the common sense of the term, they were so stupefied by His boldness of expression and by the fearlessness of His deeds, that they could not see His grounds of salvation for their souls. There is, however, not a bit of evidence that Jesus ever concealed His purposes beneath any phrases or words or parables or acts. On the contrary, He insisted in every instance that men should listen to and interpret His words and parables in line with human experiences. In fact, it is true, that He never uttered any parabolic sentiment that did not touch upon life as men live it and were asked by Him to live it. Whenever He spoke of the Kingdom of Heaven as being only within men's hearts, as under the representation of the "Bread," or "Vine," or "Shepherd," or "Lamb slain," He invariably left enough explanations to enable men of all degrees to reason their way through to some definite understanding of themselves as sinners, and how they could conduct their lives into everlasting life!

Every sentiment, therefore, from His lips during

His entire ministry had immediate reference to man's lost condition and his opportunity of being found of the Holy Spirit. From such an impression of Christ's teaching, it is impossible to escape when the Gospels are read and studied in their easy or most difficult places or parts.

(b) Take the foundation-principles of His teaching as expressed in the beginning of His early ministry. Then He said among the very first things, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"—Matt. 4:17. Using this specific call to men, to make them realize the change about to come into their social and religious affairs, He appealed to them in that wonderful Sermon on the Mount—Matt. 5:6-7. In that discourse He summarizes the truth for the world's salvation and hope of glorious destiny, within practical principles that no man can dispute, both contrastively with Old Testament interpretations of Mosaism and constructively with all conditions and problems of life. While He recognized the laws of the old dispensation from Abraham's day to the end of the Jewish rule, He pointedly placed Himself on record as the teacher of a new charter of redemption, which was to be enforced and which was so apt and positive against all Judaic negativism, that men could see the dividing-line between the old life and the new. And so He put the sharp stress upon conduct and character as the natural results of an acceptance of His words. After all, it may be asked, are they not the significant elements in every life whether reference be to the redeemed or to the lost? Surely it can

be readily seen that assets like these or liabilities like them, of human life and its conventions and institutions, are the bases of everything divine and lasting or their opposite.

Indeed, was it not the character and conduct of men and the consequent condition of the world, that needed the transforming power of Christ at the time of His coming and even before that age? And not only so, but the fruits of those conditions demanded then the utmost consideration when He found His pure, unsullied life and love meeting the peculiar and contradicting moral and social status of the Jewish national life together with the immoralities and sordid ambitions of the Roman powers.

Men were not living clean, pure, God-fearing lives then any more than during the times of the great patriarchs. Jesus knew all of this, and for this reason He called them to repentance and works of righteousness. He knew that their social, moral, and political horizons were too far away from the centers of real brotherhood and the laws that govern it toward a world-wide range. And therefore He called all men, Jews and Romans alike, to a life of purity, justice, and love,—one of the hardest things for a Jew to heed and a much harder thing for a Roman to realize in view of his national spirit. In His teaching of saving truth, Jesus urged them to gather to themselves redeemed character—the only investment needed for membership in the kingdom of God where peace and happiness prevail. Hence the cry, "Repent! See to it that your *sin* is forgiven, blotted out, that you are

registered among the people who are obedient to the laws of love; see to it that you serve one another on the basis of human coöperation and fellowship whose ends are unselfishness and sacrifice." This was His clarion call to men everywhere. This call had to be heeded before any could follow Him and associate with Him on a real foundation of sincere brotherliness and friendship. And this included the service of such a ministry as He, Himself, offered voluntarily to mankind. Here two things had to be recognized—the love of God for man and the love of man for man, in the wide circle of man's love of God and His gift of life to him!

(c) Jesus widened out these principles of the Gospel of His kingdom toward a fuller meaning by applications and representations of them at many points of His work. But in this respect He laid stress upon the particular relations men were expected to hold toward God and themselves. To the end that they might not misunderstand Him, He selected such pertinent essentials of His redemptive plan as could lead them into the right way of life. The steps in the process were clear enough to most minds but many hearts still refused to accept Him as their Messiah. He only asked them to believe on Him; accept His words of truth; repent of their sins; be willing to be saved; and born again by the Spirit of God. In this method of teaching Jesus used such wonderful examples of faith and willingness of mind as could not fail to convince the stony ignorance and disbelief of His power to redeem. An instance may be cited

of the blind boy whose sight was completely restored by the loving Christ. When this boy became conscious of the Master's compassion and felt His healing power, he could only offer his soul in belief by way of repayment. But that was not even enough of a return on his part for the great favour of sight. He rejoiced in the humiliation of suffering when he was cast out of his spiritual home. And that was not all of it. He followed Jesus and fell down before Him to worship Him. Wonderful love in return for a miraculous service to his eyes and soul! That was belief on Jesus!

An instance of those who received His message was the call of His disciples who left all to follow Him. And after a ministry of three or more years, those scholars exemplified His teachings, and when their tasks were done they gave to the world the legacies of their belief and sacrifices. Witness, if you will, the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament—their testaments of truth and love and hope as they had them from their Saviour. And read once more the stories of their devotion to Him and then, at last, the terrible sacrifices they made for His Name among men!

Study, if you care to, the stories of the Prodigal Son and Mary Magdalene, and how they were saved from sin. Those are such striking instances of Christ's saving love as cannot be found anywhere in sacred literature. Those souls and millions more like them, are the exemplars of the redeemed life Jesus Christ can confer upon any man who actually repents

of sin. Read the history, although brief, of the two men who were completely transformed by the power of God when His Spirit washed them in the blood of the New Covenant—Nicodemus and Zacchæus. These men had their natures entirely changed and were made new creatures in thought, purpose, love, and practice—something so marvelous that the mind can scarcely grasp it. Paul, that great teacher to the Gentile world of the principles of redemption, is another specimen of the transforming and ever-controlling power of Christ. His thirteen or fourteen epistles are every one of them, indisputable proof that Jesus can bestow upon a redeemed soul the values and measurements of the truth that saves the soul to the uttermost.

(d) Now, Jesus, in order to enforce the power of His Truth upon unbelieving minds, wrought His miracles of salvation like the conversion of Saul. That marvel of love's potency stands unduplicated in the annals of love's own history. Then Jesus Himself was the miracle of miracles—in the Incarnation—in His death and resurrection—all proving that He had life and absolute mastery over the grave!

The combined scholarship of the world, from every conceivable center of thought and from every age of humanity, is confessing that Jesus Christ *is* the greatest of all living personalities—the mightiest potentiality ever known here—and the *only Saviour* of the souls of men in the universe! Against this conclusion the cycles of a timeless eternity with their treasures of all knowledge, cannot array themselves for a great

denial. There may be ten million arguments of reason—there may be ten more millions of sceptical fancies—there may be ten times ten millions of cries of repudiation—and there may be a thousand million materialistic sophistries—all of these trying to prove that Jesus never lived—never loved—never died—never rose again from the dead—still there remains the greatest, the most wonderful, the unimpeached *fact* of the universe—*the fact of Jesus Christ.*

His words, every one of them in the Gospel stories and the inspired words of Paul as well, are the undisputed, uncontradicted, undenying witnesses of His majestic mind, of His super-excellent soul, of His wonderful love, and of His unspeakable sacrifice! And wonder of all things. These things are true, for in whatever way the story of His life and love are studied, contrastively, comparatively, constructively, or destructively, the truth evolved from His mind is, in the final analysis, the only saving power in the world today. That noble, pure, white soul that arose out of eternity and graced earth's barren deserts of sin, with its power and prestige of wooing love, and giving His precious blood for its cleansing, has never been matched in any way, since the womb of endless life gave Him birth. And that supremest of all sacrifices which His undying compassion rendered upon Calvary for mankind, and a lost world, remains forever unduplicated and inexplicable as a mystery of love and suffering. But it is, without the least doubt, the only specific or antidote for sin and its dire consequences to the soul. The flow and favour of such

love, now more stimulating, more exalting, more precious, and more convincing than all of human love, born as it was in the breast of the world's best, purest, and greatest of all Beings, is still unparalleled, unscathed, unspotted, unsullied, unmatched, undivided, and unbroken, before the cruel judgment-bar of a universal civilization—and is still the sweetest treasure Heaven may bestow upon us today!

And so this Christ presented Himself before and to the world, in His character, example, truth, love, and death. But, withal, the grandest feature of it, that He took the common-sense way, the appealing way of convincing men of His messages of hope and happiness for their souls. Wondrous plan of redemption for a dying race!

(1) In His plan of service to men, Jesus had some things that ought to be considered here. He had the courage of His words and works! As He begun to speak with authority, even at the age of twelve, in the Temple, He had no fear of man's knowledge nor of his intellectual hate. Human notions or prejudices did not make Him waver in His mind or cause Him to compromise His statements or conclusions. He spake as no man ever spake. He never trimmed His truth to suit the human traditions, customs, and institutions of men. On the contrary, He rebuked them with unsparing severity when their sins infected them as they did. But He also pitied the sin-sick hearts and souls of men and women and offered them release from their terrible burdens and troubles. He never once faltered in his program of service to every one, even at the

great risk of His own life. No suffering, in behalf of a ruined world, made Him retreat into obscurity. And the death of a martyr had no terrors for Him when He thought of a race on its way to destruction! His heroism of mind—His courage of heart—and His passion of soul—were sublime and inexpressible!

(2) So it is seen that His sense of balance, in every sentiment, in every word, in every principle of truth, and in every conclusion to which He came, was absolutely clear and unbiased in every way. When He did speak His words or language was without flaw or defect. Such sanity of phrase or thought never fell from the lips of any person since the first letter of the alphabet of life begun to be made. He knew no boundaries of class, clan or race in His mode of speech or His manner of love. Provincialism of ideas or customs, though born as a Jew and surrounded to the day of His death by a decided and most narrow race of people, never once moved His great soul to change His favours toward them or the world. He belonged, in this respect, to no nations on the earth—He was the Master-Man-Christ of the human universe—and the Saviour of humanity, as He is today!

(3) His mission stands revealed as we see Him coming to seek and save the lost and perishing. He knew men in their sins as no man ever knew them; He had come to save them from all sin as no other man ever dared to do. In this service of love, they could not deceive Him by trickery, treachery, or deceit. He read into their secret or open plans before they knew them themselves. He had their purposes

of life before Him a thousand years before they could frame them into action. He knew them so well and so infallibly, that they either believed on Him and appealed for pity and forgiveness, or they scorned His words, despised His pleas, and in the bitterest hatred, rejected Him. But, oh, the matchlessness of His life! He loved them all the more, in spite of their evil thoughts about Him and His plans to save them. He offered them His life if only they might take Him as their Saviour. But He warned them, too, of the awful fate awaiting them, when they finally came to a rejection of the overtures of salvation.

(4) There was thus an intensity in His teaching that men were awed into silence, and quite frequently their wickedness was turned into diabolic hate thereby. He spoke so deliberately to their souls, that with arrows of truth, they were shot through the very marrow of life itself. And yet He appealed to them to follow Him; to accept His love; and to duplicate His sacrifices. How gentle, how sympathetic, how compassionate, and how tear-filled were those pleas! So deep, so enthusiastic, so penetrating, yet so decisive were they, demanding immediate obedience to his plan of redemption, requiring unswerving loyalty to Him alone, exacting undivided love! Who could meet these challenges of the Christ?

(5) He said what He wanted to say, for one great purpose, and then it was final. His words were very few but they were the ultimates of His soul. His words were no arguments. His words were the logic of truth in its unchangeableness. His words were the

philosophy of salvation. To this end, there was no need for Him to prove His plan of redemption. It was as He knew it and had it. The issue was *sin*—not sin in species, or kind or degree but just sin, in itself, with every consequence was His consideration and condemnation. With this before and within Him, He offered salvation from sin, with every possible treasure of character, hope, life, and happiness to men's souls. He had no other sweep of service besides this. And while His words against sin were so terse His offers of salvation were as concise as the movements of the stars.

No philosophy of life or hope among the wisest of men, on our earth today, offers such a condensed schedule of redemption as Jesus Christ, the Son of God, now offers—"believe on Me and live." There is nothing, let it be repeated, like it in the religious or ethical literatures of the world. That epigram of heaven, uttered by Him, has become the epitome of salvatory hope for men on earth! And none, among the greatest sons of men, since the cosmic fiat to the very present hour of intellectual power, has ever given forth such words and exemplified them, in time, for eternal realities!

(6) And then Jesus followed, in His teachings, the enlightening methods of two worlds—leading men from their earthly thinking and living to the divine way of thought and service. He ever used for illustration, for incentives, and for basic practices, the things man knows and sees and uses every day. The fields and flowers; the seeds and sheaves; the morning

light and the darkness of the night; the rain and snow; the fishes and fishermen; the money and the market; the oil and the olive trees; the feast and favours of the Temple; the religion of the day and the rigours of the law; the courts and the courtesies of life; the conduct of men and their characters; the denials of the truth and the destinies that await them—all these He used to bring men nearer to Him and heaven nearer to earth. The beauty of this application of the common things to man's higher life, was one of His noblest assets of speech and thought and love. To Him, it may be noted, all things were godlike and never profane until man made them otherwise. Man, indeed, often made them the agencies of sin and wrong, but to Jesus they were the voices and songs, the treasures and trusts of a kingdom, at once so beautiful, so pure, so serene, and so wonderful, that He could use them as the ascending steps for men's souls into the palace of eternal life!

(7) In His appeal, therefore, He directed His words of truth and deeds of love, to man's sense of right and to the conscious powers which all normal beings are supposed to have. Concentrated to a single point of unquestioned meaning, His appeal was to men to think rightly and to do rightly! No wonder it was a challenge to their methods of thought, for they were not thinking God's thoughts. No great wonder, too, that it was a daring denial of their modes of living for they were not living God's ways. And no greater wonder, still, that it was a mighty questioning of their love, for they were only loving themselves and despising all others.

The sting and strength of His words penetrated beyond their Temple rites and ceremonies—beyond their cold traditions—beyond their weightier laws into their stony hearts and memories until they gnashed their very teeth against his soul! They could not bear the sound of His words even: "Whosoever heareth these words of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man who built his house upon a rock"—Matt. 7:24. But they had built their house upon the sands of mighty social pretenses and heartless religious practices! "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me"—Luke 9:23. But they hated labour and the humiliations of any cross were the stigmas which they would not bear. Still He gave them to understand that He who could answer these pleas and willingly so, would enter into a new world of life and love, in which the Son of God has ever been the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Master-builder of eternal character. They had no king but Cæsar; they had no world-kingdom but Israel!

(8) Then, once more, Jesus had a unique method of teaching His way into the hearts of men by quiet and serene methods which could not be set aside. His conversations with His disciples, with the leaders of the Jewish Church, and with others of various types, show how tactful and tremendous was the force of His words and sentiments upon the calloused and brazen consciences of His hearers. People of all kinds came to Him during the day and at the hour of midnight, in private homes and public places, in synagogues and

Temple, in mountains and highways, to talk to Him about the smallest as well as the gravest problems of life and the future! For every question put to Him, He had the answer that uncovered the matter in every phase to the eyes and souls of His inquirers. And in every instance He proved by His words or manner, that He was the Mind of God and the delegated mouthpiece of heaven—and the giver of the message of glad tidings of salvation and peace to a sin-laden world.

So let the devoted Sunday-school teacher attempt to teach the truth and love of Jesus Christ and he will win souls to Him, the greatest of all teachers in time or eternity!

Perhaps the suggestions appended here may be of great help to the teacher. Take, for example, the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and analyze them harmoniously for a consistent life-story of Christ. They will naturally fall into three distinct periods, though, in their narrative forms, they appear somewhat independent histories of the same Saviour. But they each cover these periods very clearly with statements that are convincing and upon the whole confirmatory of every fact in His life. The first period could be divided into five parts; the second into five parts and the third or last into ten or twelve parts. Let us take these periods and try to give the main things therein:

1. *Years of Obscurity*....1. Baptism.
   2. Calling the first Disciples.

3. First Miracle.
4. Cleansing the Temple.
5. First Conversions.

2. *Year of Popularity*....1. Rejected at Nazareth.
2. At Capernaum.
3. Call of the Twelve.
4. Sermon on Mount.
5. Five Thousand Fed.

3. *Year of Opposition*....1. Peter's Confession.
2. His Death Predictions.
3. His Transfiguration.
4. The Feast of Tabernacles.
5. Raising Lazarus.
6. Jewish Hatred.
7. His Trial.
8. Crucifixion.
9. Burial and Resurrection.
10. Forty Days on Earth.
11. His Manifestations.
12. His Ascension.
13. The Comforter.
14. His Second Coming.

A similar analysis may be followed in every great or small instance of the New Testament, as in the case of the Prodigal Son. The books of the Old Testament can be analyzed in the same way by the teacher. Take the Book of Job, an ideal of human perfection, according to the oldest Haggadah and Mishnah, and outline His sufferings as a person and then in contrast with Prometheus or Dante.

XIII

THE TEACHER AND HIS EVANGEL

WHEN a Sunday-school teacher has learned how to teach and is willing to assume his place among the real workers of his school, he will at once remember the meaning and motive of the Gospel news—the blessed news of Jesus and His love. He will now begin to measure out the sense and surety of the news to the spiritual needs of his class. But when he does this, he realizes that he must, himself, be under the stress and struggle and suffering of the news as has been so forcibly said, so as to give effectiveness to it with the minds and hearts of his hearers.

There can be no question that every " twice-born " Sunday-school teacher is under the Gospel story as if under the unseen power of some heavenly influence. He is Gospelized, so to speak—God-spelled, for that is the real meaning of the term Gospel. It is God's spell holding the saved soul within its gracious, enchanting grip as no other story of love ever held fast a human life. Perhaps this seems too wonderful to be believed or understood by the common mind. And yet it is true that God for sufficient reasons known to Himself, has bound up within His redemptive plan such lives as have surrendered themselves to that mighty " spell " of His saving love, for service.

Now, when the Sunday-school teacher, therefore, has become subject to this " spell of God," he is a real evangelizer. For then as such he goes forth to tell the good news—the good news of salvation to the unredeemed. Hence to evangelize is to point out how men may become the children of God under the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Here is the deeper side of the " spell of God," for the power of God unto salvation starts there. The Sunday-school teacher must get it into his heart from there—then publish it, live it, sacrifice unto it, because having learned it, he is an instrument in God's hands for teaching souls how to find Christ.

But while he has the enduement of this " spell " so deeply in his spirit, he dare not fail to proclaim the message of an imperishable love—*God's intention* toward an unsaved world. And *that* was not—is not—to condemn but to save the world. This is, therefore, one of the most essential features of the God-spell, for the Sunday-school teacher to impress upon his or her class. God intended from all beginning to save men —He has that same feeling for souls today. He has never relaxed His efforts in behalf of humanity—" for if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." " And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world "—I Jno. 2:2-3.

These passages clearly show how deeply and how far God-in-Christ intends to go towards the redemption of mankind. And this unquestionably is the evangel of good news—the redemptive mind of God in Jesus'

atoning sacrifice for the sins of men. This *is the message* for every evangelist who teaches the souls of children, men and women, how to get eternal life. No other message does he need for his work. It is altogether sufficient for every hungry and thirsty soul on the highway of this sin-burdened world!

Permit it to be said once more that this evangelizing message—the one great and supreme thing—that Christ died for sin—is now the available factor in the redemptive plan of God. It is free to all—to accept or reject as they may incline or choose. No Sunday-school teacher seeking to evangelize his scholars, should ever overlook this mighty truth for a moment. For here is his influence in bringing them to a decision for Christ their Saviour.

In view of this fact, the Sunday-school teacher can stress five or more things so as to set the message clearly before the class. (a) He can assure the members, saved or not, that salvation is positively one of God's most precious promises to the soul. (b) Under the promise, God has something worth while—something of incalculable value to each soul. (c) This valuable or wonderful thing is a new life wrought through regeneration. (d) This new life has absolute guarantee in the death and resurrection of Christ. (e) Because Jesus died and rose again He gave double proof that life bestowed upon a repentant soul is forever fortified against the sting of death and the victory of the grave. (f) This makes Jesus sponsor for every redeemed soul at the judgment bar of God at the last day.

These points cannot be emphasized too strongly before the unsaved, for they really represent the ground-work of all redemptive service, from the angles of both principle and fact—the central principle of salvation and the fact that they may be saved from sin. And so, when it becomes plain that Jesus can render effectively a program of love and sacrifice to any unredeemed man or woman, it necessarily proves that there is a supreme influence in his truth which does free souls from sin without the least shadow of a doubt.

The Sunday-school teacher can, according to Christ's evident purposes, carry this same program of love and sacrifice in his own life. And when he does so, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, his work will be successful, for answers will invariably come from those who are being evangelized by the truth. God's Spirit, in fact, stands by to use such a teacher and his wonderful words of life! He enforces each precept and presentation of Christ, by his immediate pressure upon the consciences and hearts of the scholars, urging them to yield to the truth. This is God's method of evangelizing through the human agency!

The Pentecostal era of the early Church is proof that God does add to human efforts, His approval, by drawing unbelieving and lost lives to His way of saving them. Peter's mighty sermons which caused hundreds to cry out—" what must we do to be saved? "—are the indubitable records of God's method of reaching men and women for the Kingdom of Heaven! The

evangelistic successes of others, in more recent eras, like those of Finney, Moody, Torrey, and Chapman, have given the history of God's salvatory work the strongest endorsements of spiritual methods peculiar to His purposes.

It seems, therefore, entirely correct to believe that God's plan is to use men and women to save men and women through the atoning merits of the crucified Christ, under the power of the Holy Spirit. In fact, there does not appear to be any other way of bringing the lost, unsaved, sinful souls of the world, into the kingdom of heaven. If there is another way of doing it, it has not yet been discovered, or revealed to the eager hearts of men!

And here appears another fact, equally as important as the foregoing, that every Sunday-school teacher should know, under the influence of the Spirit of God, the art of evangelizing souls. This must be recognized as one of the greatest feats of all religious belief and practice! Much has been said upon this point in another chapter, but, in spite of that fact, there is need for more emphasis here of the same truth, because the delicate and noble art of winning men to Christ has almost become a lost art in Christian service. Why it should be so may be a difficult thing to explain. Nevertheless, it is true, in the presence of this lamentable condition, that the ringing, fascinating, enrapturing spell of God, will accomplish wonders with the unconverted through the consecrated hearts of Sunday-school teachers. It is not a physical nor a metaphysical impossibility with God—this ser-

vice which He can render in the teacher's life toward the unsaved, when He gives His Holy Spirit full sway over them. For let it be remembered that God's spell of truth and life never yet spelled inconceivability or impossibility with a single vowel or consonant of doubt, compromise, or defeat. When He spells the word—redemption in letters of blood—He invariably injects into it the fine art of possibility, for He has the art of *never* yielding to anything personal or material, while a soul is at stake! And this is all the more true when His chosen servants of love and sacrifice, are coöperating with Him unto the salvation of lost souls! God, never yet, it dare be said, allowed a soul to be lost—while another living, really redeemed life—sought unceasingly, according to the plan or art of His infinite Spirit, for its salvation. Is this too much to say—too bold a belief—or too positive an assertion in view of the unspiritual conditions of the modern Christian Churches?

Here is the secret, however, in evangelistic work—a secret so few of us know. Still it is no greater mystery than many other things about life and its future. It ought to be known by every worker for Christ—it can be known by them! And when it is known by them, they have a threefold element of power not found anywhere else in Christian experience. Upon the possession of this dynamic, they have a right to proclaim the good news by command of God, by permission of God's Spirit, and by the compulsion of love. These elements are present always with the soul-winner in

his evangelizing work. He cannot fail to recognize them. And he will not hesitate to use them.

Then back of these mighty forces, the winner of souls will find coördinate agreements that God intends to keep for His servants. In view of His Son's death, He expects to save men from sin. This fact He wishes His workers to realize. He offers all His infinite resources in winning souls unto salvation. This other fact, He desires His workers to recognize in the exercise of their faith and the expenditure of their love. He gives also to His soul-winners the guaranteed ability, enthusiasm, and passion to gather many hearts into the Kingdom. This wonderful fact, He asks His believing labourers to lean upon because they need physical as well as spiritual strength to conquer.

When, therefore, the soul-winner or evangelist, begins to fully realize these things, or has gripped them into his very soul, he will go on teaching the infallible, saving Word of Life—and that will be his strong arm for spiritual mastery. He will go on, firmly held under the influence of the Holy Spirit so that not a word that he utters or an act that he does, will be unheeded or lost. And he will go on—pleading with tenderness, sympathy, and compassion, so that under the power of a Saviour's love, the lost will find their stony, or ice-bound hearts break and melt. Still he will go on, wrestling with men and women and their stubborn wills and sin-laden souls, until they will yield to the entreaties, to the pathos, and to the piteous appeals of his heart, which Jacob-like, knows no let-up or defeat while one single soul is yet to be won!

The winning art of the Sunday-school teacher, it can be seen, must be more than winning—it must be never-surrendering till victory crowns the endeavour.

(a) He must assault, so to say, the very citadels of men's sin-torn and sin-laden souls, with a fearlessness that never falters, with the Word that never fails, and with the end in view of winning them to Jesus Christ. So, in every talk, whether of private or public nature, the soul-winner must come at the consciences and hearts of the scholars if he would get them.

(b) He must bring them the Word also in printed form, through some tract or in some other material way. This is one of God's fine agencies of sowing the seed. And it has been found of the greatest value to Sunday-school workers for spreading the truth of life. One need only recall the great influence of Dr. Newman's beautiful tract—"Come to Jesus," for through it tens of thousands have been saved unto God.

(c) Let the Sunday-school teacher soul-winner write gospelized letters—putting into them such sentiments and sense of truth—such lines of love and life—such pleas of interest and concern—as to cause sinners to believe that the day of grace never was more open than now. Letters out of the heart of a teacher's experiences will accomplish wonders with boys and girls and men and women too.

(d) Let the teacher call again—again—and again upon his class, with the same pressing entreaties, assuring them that he loves them and that he means to lead them into the highway of life. And more than

this—that he will not have soul peace until they have accepted Christ.

(e) Let the teacher sing unto them the songs of Moses and the Lamb. Let him remember that "music hath its charms" as truly as the soft word that calms the troubled spirit of man. How often has the tender and sweet sentiment or strain of a song brought tears, stirred the heart, and impelled the soul to higher, and better things! Those old familiar hymns or songs like "Jesus Lover of My Soul," "Just as I Am," "Saviour, Thy Dying Love," "Tell Me the Old, Old Story," "He Lifted Me," "Lord, I'm Coming Home," "Jesus is Calling," "In the Garden," "Saved by Grace," "Ninety-and-Nine," and thousands of others, have never failed to recall men and women to their lost condition and wooed them to the homeward way to their God. Oh, how full of pathos, pity, and passion those songs have been when sung by consecrated lips like those of the noble sainted ones—Bliss, Phillips, Sankey, Sweeney, and hundreds more—over in the City of Song. How many hundreds and thousands of men, women, and children have responded, in deep contrition and repentance, to the music of the Christian churches and their singers. Indeed, it will be so, that many a soul now in glory will testify at the last great day, that some song from the soul of a Sunday-school teacher led them to Jesus.

Let us go one step more before we close. It was love of souls that lent Sankey such power to bring them to Jesus through song. When he and Moody were in Scotland, looking into the earnest faces of

thousands of men and women who needed a Saviour, they never faltered in their impassioned pleas of preaching and songs to cheer them and to draw them on to the sacred Cross of Jesus Christ. On one occasion, in particular, after Moody had finished a wonderful discourse on the "Lost Sheep," he turned to Sankey and said: "Please sing the 'Ninety and Nine.'" Then without excitement, but under a divine impulse, the impulse of Christ's undying love for sinners, Sankey's lips broke forth in that beautiful, unmatched Gospel song, all-improvised for the time, known so well as the immortal "Ninety and Nine." And thousands replied to its sweet strains by giving their hearts to Jesus, their shepherd and Lord.

Christian Sunday-school teacher and soul-winner—sing to your class the Song of Redemption as Sankey sung it and you will see souls coming to your Saviour!

XIV

THE TEACHER'S TEARS AND TRIUMPHANT LOVE

THE secret of a successful Sunday-school teacher's work, as we have learned, lies in the desire to overcome everything of human life for the life to be, through a passionate love of souls. The fruits of such love and its labours are to be seen in the lives won to Jesus. He stands here as the proof of the assertion, for during His active ministry on earth, He won men to Himself—to His ideals of life and to the reality of immortal destiny. Those ideals were simple enough for those who were willing to accept them. And the reality of the life to come to every soul believing in Him, was just as simple in a way, when the fact of the new birth was made an inevitable part of spiritual experience. Men were permitted to grasp them—His ideals of living and life hereafter—as He outlined them, for He gave them gladly to their souls because He loved them!

The Sunday-school teacher who has come to practise the Master's program of saving men, as we have tried to outline it in these lectures, will find himself persuaded at every point of his services, to be a living embodiment of the Christ-ideals that shall lead souls into the kingdom of love and peace. And he need,

therefore, have no fears about them for he can see, at once and always, that they are realistic and so adaptable to all persons and conditions of human life.

Now, this fact is such a truism that it seems almost a waste of time to lengthen out the explanation why a Sunday-school teacher or Christian worker does succeed in winning souls unto Christ. But there is yet a line of thought that should be emphasized once more, showing how the ideals of a Christian belief, of a robust faith, of a true character, and of a sacrificing love, are the concerted forces that lead men to Jesus for eternal life!

In reality, the clue to the meaning of the statement made, lies in the plain words of John when he speaks of Jesus in this wise, "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end"—John 13:1. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"—John 15:13. Here is both the key and the lock to the mystery of the service that idealizes human life and brings it at last to the completest realization of heavenly things and divine joy. The Key is undying love and the Lock is supreme sacrifice unto death. Love that lives for the souls of men, undeniably true and lasting, will give its last drop of blood and devotion to their rescue from sin that they may have eternal hope and peace! Love that can thus help to transform a life into one of righteousness is of matchless power and has in itself the elements of an endless destiny! A love that can hold within its grasp under an influence heaven alone can understand, a redeemed soul, now turned into the

sweetest of spirits, is love that must mean everything to our world wherein the great harvest of living beings are to be gathered. Indeed, it must mean—such love—for every human life the very best of everything, in the way of education, refinement, culture, liberty, happiness, and spiritual prosperity. Love—precious love—redeeming love gives all of these—or renders it possible to have them. And as a treasure-house ever filled with the choice things of God, love lives in perfect deeds and has those days that are eternal!

Jesus, while He taught such a science and art of love, lived it every day of His life. In our world of lovelessness, in the large circles of men's sordid desires, in the spheres of human selfishness and enslavements, He made His love the strongest power to save from all these conditions. Here, to His love was the curse of sin, and that curse could only be met by a force greater and eternal. If it was not met, in any event, it meant death to every hope of the soul—death to every spring of happiness—and death to every wish for blissful ages of joy. Death came as the curse of man, but the great love of Jesus came as the salvation of man from that curse!

This love, therefore, not only met the fearful and greatest need of mankind—the removal of the curse of sin—but it met the eager yearning of the heart of man as he sought to find the way home to his God! Wonder of wonders—such love as Christ gave to save from sin and such love to inspire men to journey on toward the gates of eternal life!

Now, the Sunday-school teacher must have a clear

vision of such love, if he would bring himself to the exact place of an ideal loving service unto the souls of men and their Lord. As a soul-winner, he can only realize the sense and spirit of real sacrifice—sacrifice that compassionates the subjects of sin—that wins them finally to Christ, when he gets into his very heart the actual scene of his Saviour winning a soul. And when he allows himself to be influenced by such a real experience, he will become so conscious of God that he can win sinners at every step of his career. When God, therefore, assumes to be the vitalizing, impelling, and controlling force in a Christian worker's life, the souls of the lost are bound to yield to entreaties of love. In fact, they cannot refuse to accept the truth, even though they are self-willed, resisting, and stubbornly unwilling to give in fully at once. They will eventually respond to the freeing power of love, because, if the Christian's life is Christ imbued, they will be unable to shut out of their hearts the influence of His loving ways and wish.

Love not only invents the plan of rescuing the lost, but it incarnates it in the most loving of services to them. It lives only through a vicariousness of self for others. This is the price it pays for a man's soul with the life of the world here, but for the life of the world to come. In such an offer, however, the supreme settlement is a life for a life—or as has been previously said—a soul saved for a soul unsaved! Nothing less than this can satisfy the demands of tears and love. It must be everything to all men, but it must give everything to all men as well. And in so doing, it

must give unselfishly, gratuitously, vicariously, tearfully, until the debt is paid—and then more still—until life shall eternally be united to God in glory.

Jesus seeks souls for their fellowship on earth and in heaven. He said, "where I am ye shall be also." They shall be with Him here and in that city that lieth four-square, who have been loved by Him and for whom His tears and blood were once shed. What great hearts they must be—in that city of pure gold—the great hearts of a kingdom—the love-makers of a spiritual democracy that shall endure forever!

Jesus mingles with them always because they are in bodies cleansed by His tears and in robes of white washed in His blood. They are to Him now the joy of the morning, the song of the noontide, and the glory of the eventide of the day eternal, if such there be. They are to Him the glorious, beautiful blossoms of His garden of bliss. He sees them; He talks to them; He loves them with undying love—a love sweeter than eternity's sweetest love!

Sunday-school teacher just think! Jesus loves the souls you have brought to Him. Loves them—loves them—and loves them! The warmth of His love is their delight! The glow of His love is their joy! The preciousness of His love is their song of glory!

Oh, Sunday-school teachers—have you that love? Is that love the impelling motive of your lives toward the souls of the lost? Is that the love with which you strive to win them unto salvation? Is that the love whose tears are helping to wash away their sins? If you have such love and tears, then you can go on your

missions of mercy without fear or doubt. But as you go do not spare the time for delay. Use every ounce of your love—every hot tear—to win souls. Let not the golden harvest perish! Love, love, and love them; weep, weep, and weep for them, until they are yours and Christ's!

Sunday-school teacher, remember in your work of soul-winning, that Jesus saves souls today; that they become His; that He saves them to be His own forever. His salvation is endlessly given to those who accept it. Here lies the perfection of His sacrifice; here is the root of His love, its blossoms and fruitage watered by His tears. And here is the great gift of immortality—His treasure to a redeemed soul. In this knowledge and assurance go labour on at your blessed task of winning the souls of your scholars even to the going down of the sun!

THE END

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